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(54) **PROCESS FOR INTRODUCING A
STABILIZING ELEMENT INTO A
VERTEBRAL COLUMN**

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2002/4627 (2013.01); A61F 2002/4628
(2013.01)

(76) Inventors: **Christian Röbbling**, Freiburg (DE);
Claudia Rieger, Halle/Saale (DE);
Farman Hedayat, Köln (DE)

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U.S.C. 154(b) by 597 days.

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A61F 2002/30484; A61F 2002/448
USPC 606/246, 264–266, 309, 310, 313–316,
606/318, 326–328; 623/17.11, 17.16
See application file for complete search history.

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A61B 17/70 (2006.01)

A61B 17/84 (2006.01)

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A61F 2/4455 (2013.01); **A61F 2/4611**
(2013.01); **A61B 2017/681** (2013.01); **A61F**
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2002/30166 (2013.01); **A61F 2002/30176**
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2002/30471 (2013.01); **A61F 2002/30484**
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2002/30523 (2013.01); **A61F 2002/30565**
(2013.01); **A61F 2002/30566** (2013.01); **A61F**
2002/30571 (2013.01); **A61F 2002/30579**
(2013.01); **A61F 2002/30598** (2013.01); **A61F**

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Primary Examiner — Jan Christopher Merene

Assistant Examiner — Atiya Mahmud

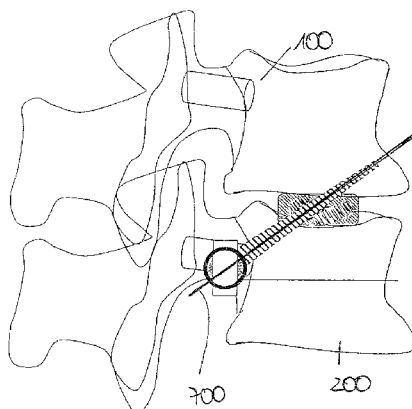
(74) *Attorney, Agent, or Firm* — Andrew F. Young, Esq.;
Lackebach Siegel, LLP

(57)

ABSTRACT

A process for introducing a stabilizing element into a vertebral column, in which the stabilizing element is introduced in such a manner that the stabilizing element connects two adjacent vertebral bodies to one another.

14 Claims, 38 Drawing Sheets



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A61F 2/46 (2006.01)
A61B 17/68 (2006.01)
A61F 2/30 (2006.01)

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FIG. 1B

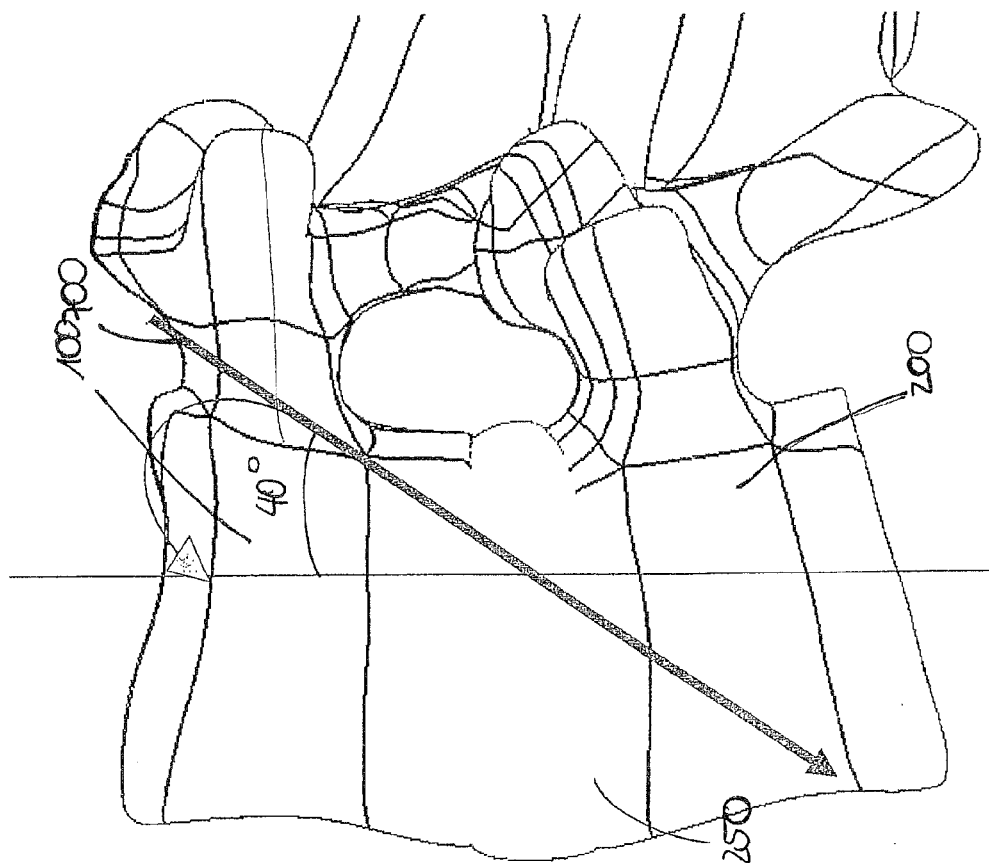
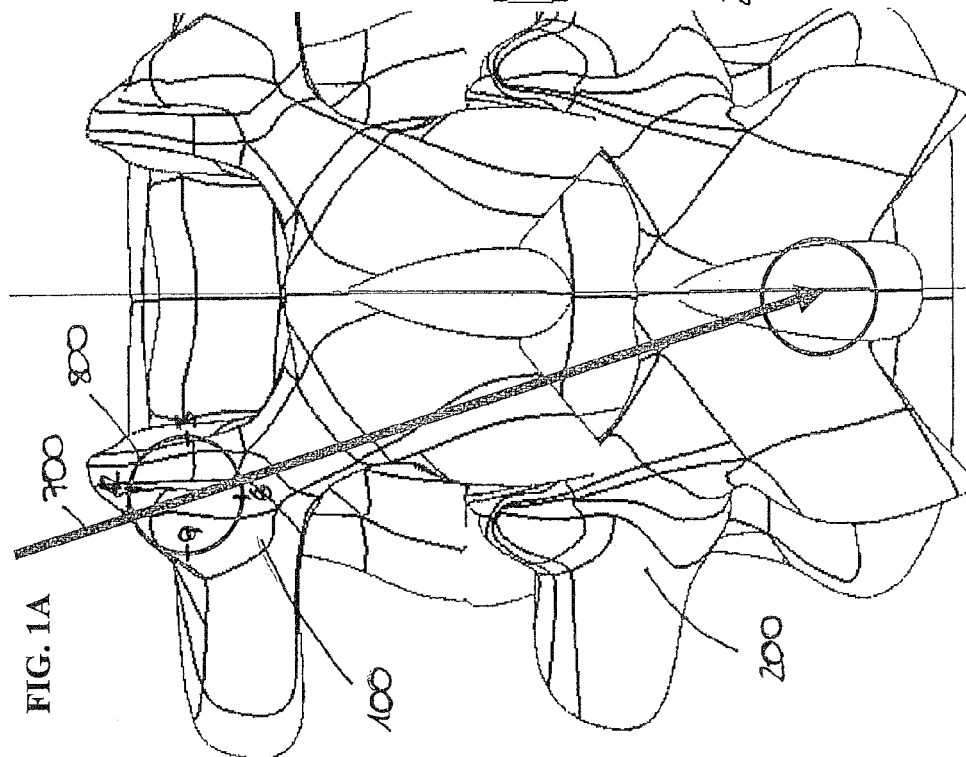
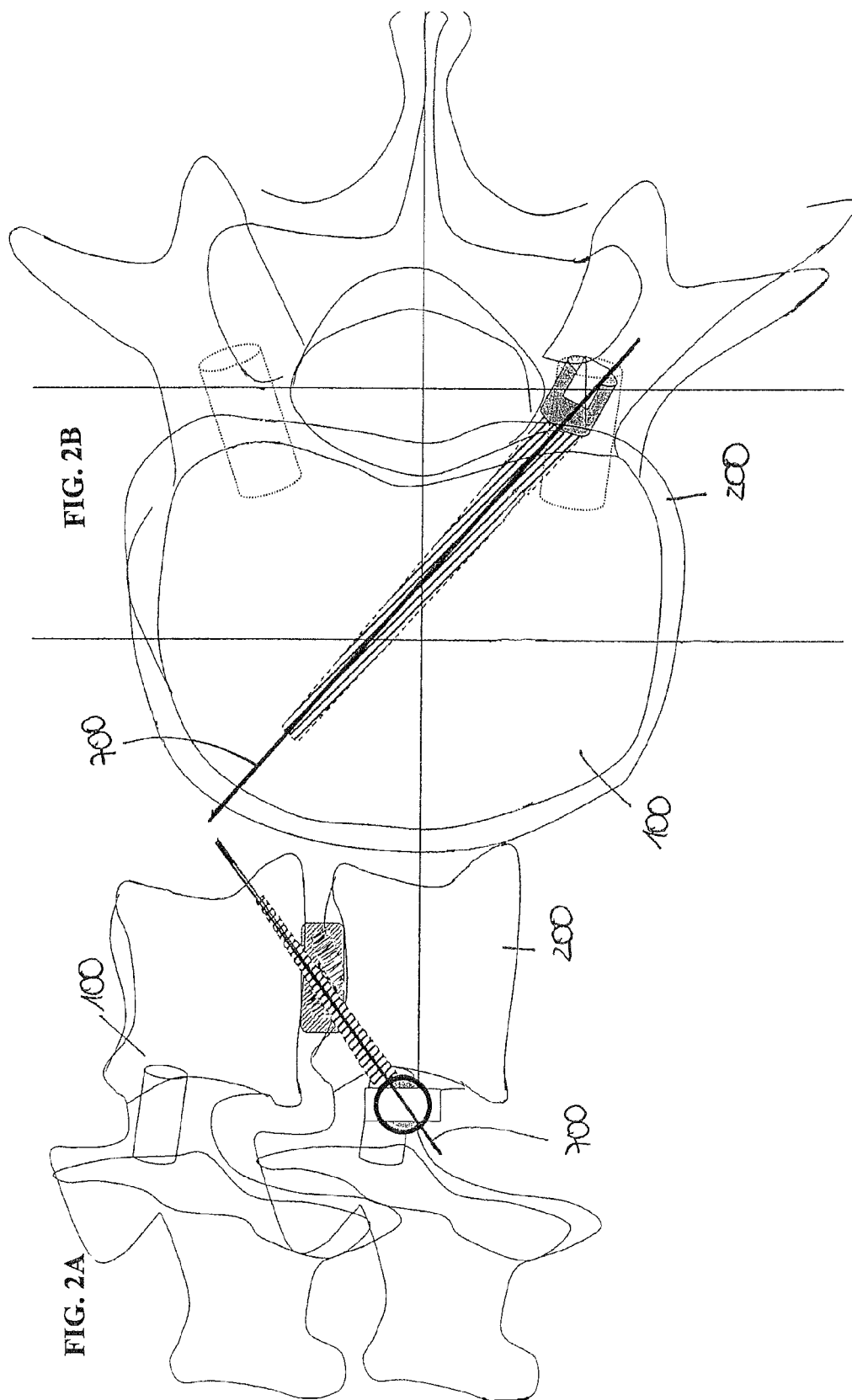
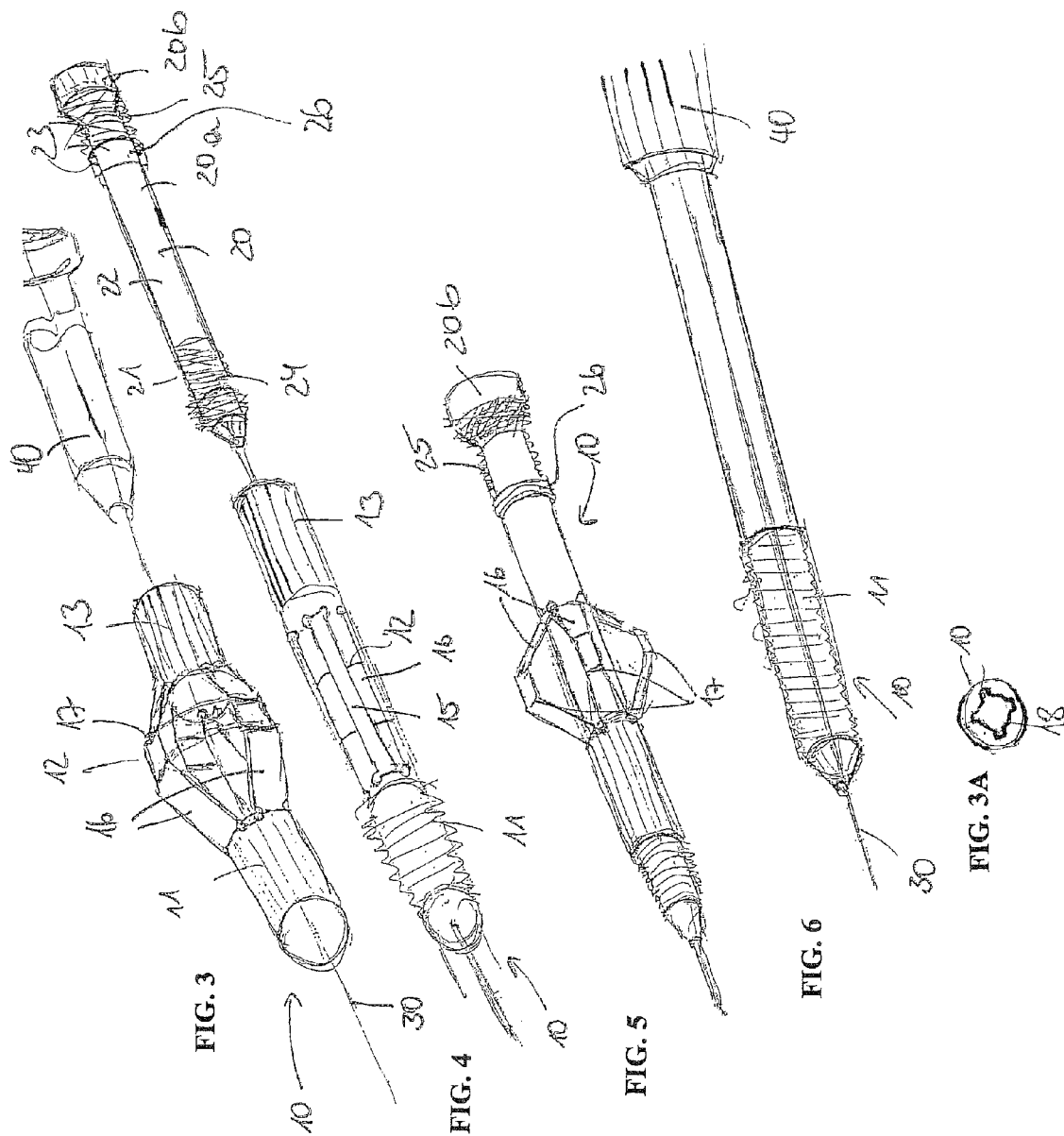
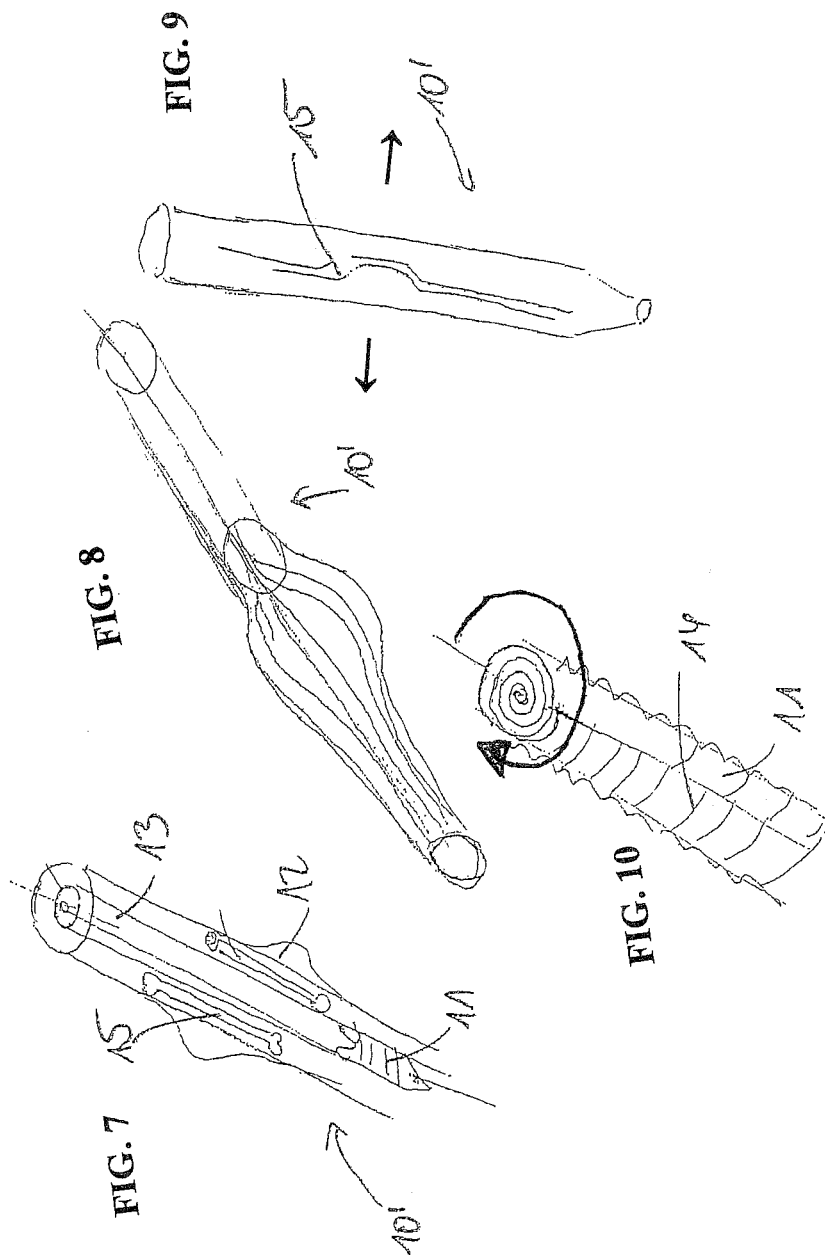


FIG. 1A









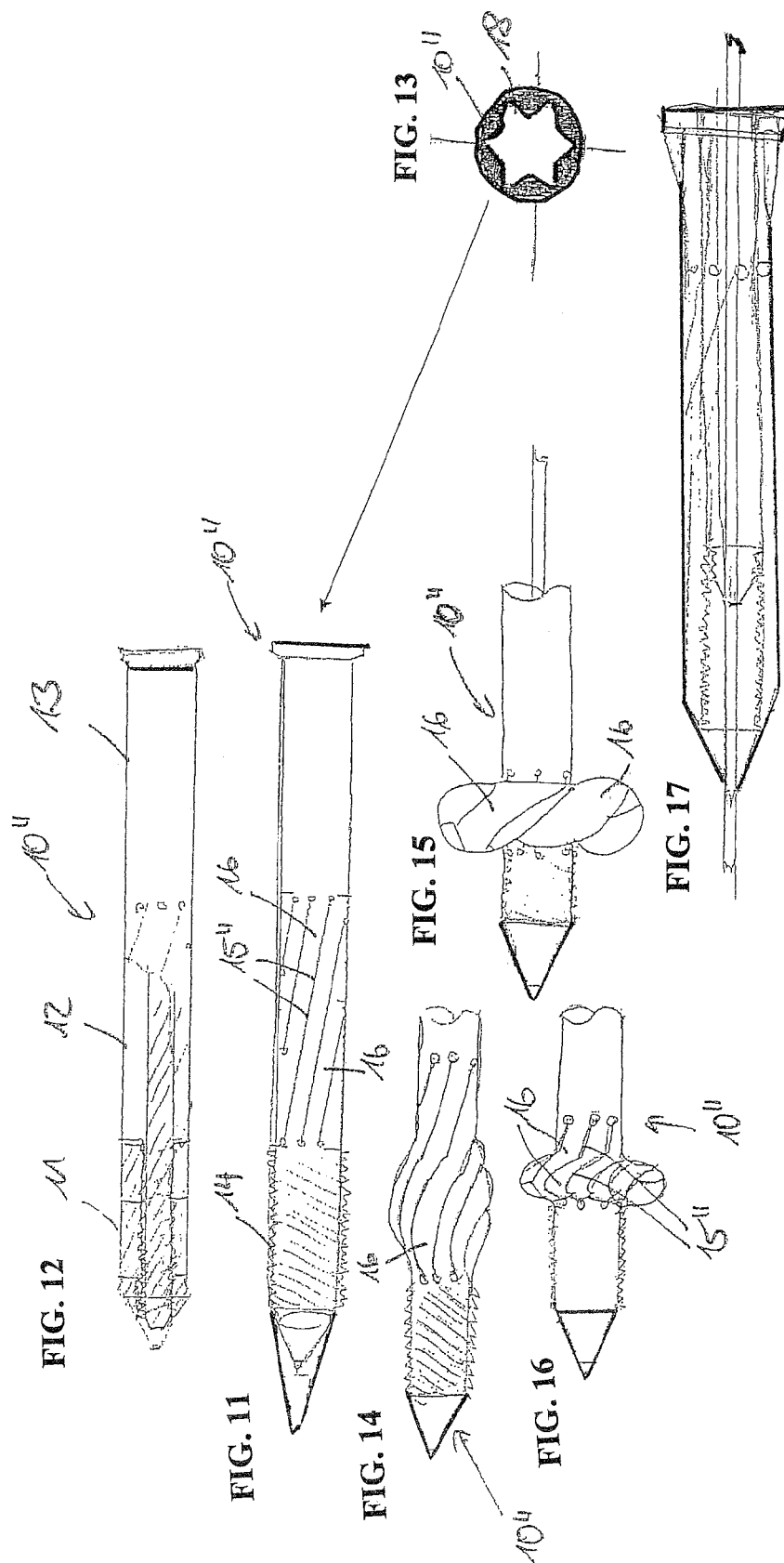
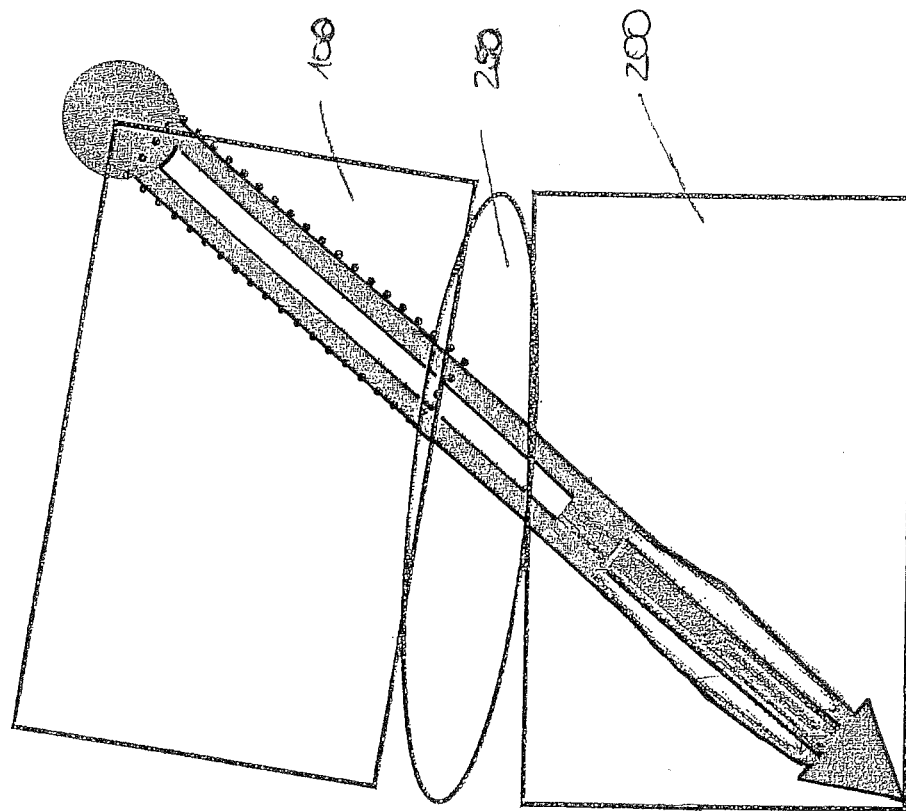
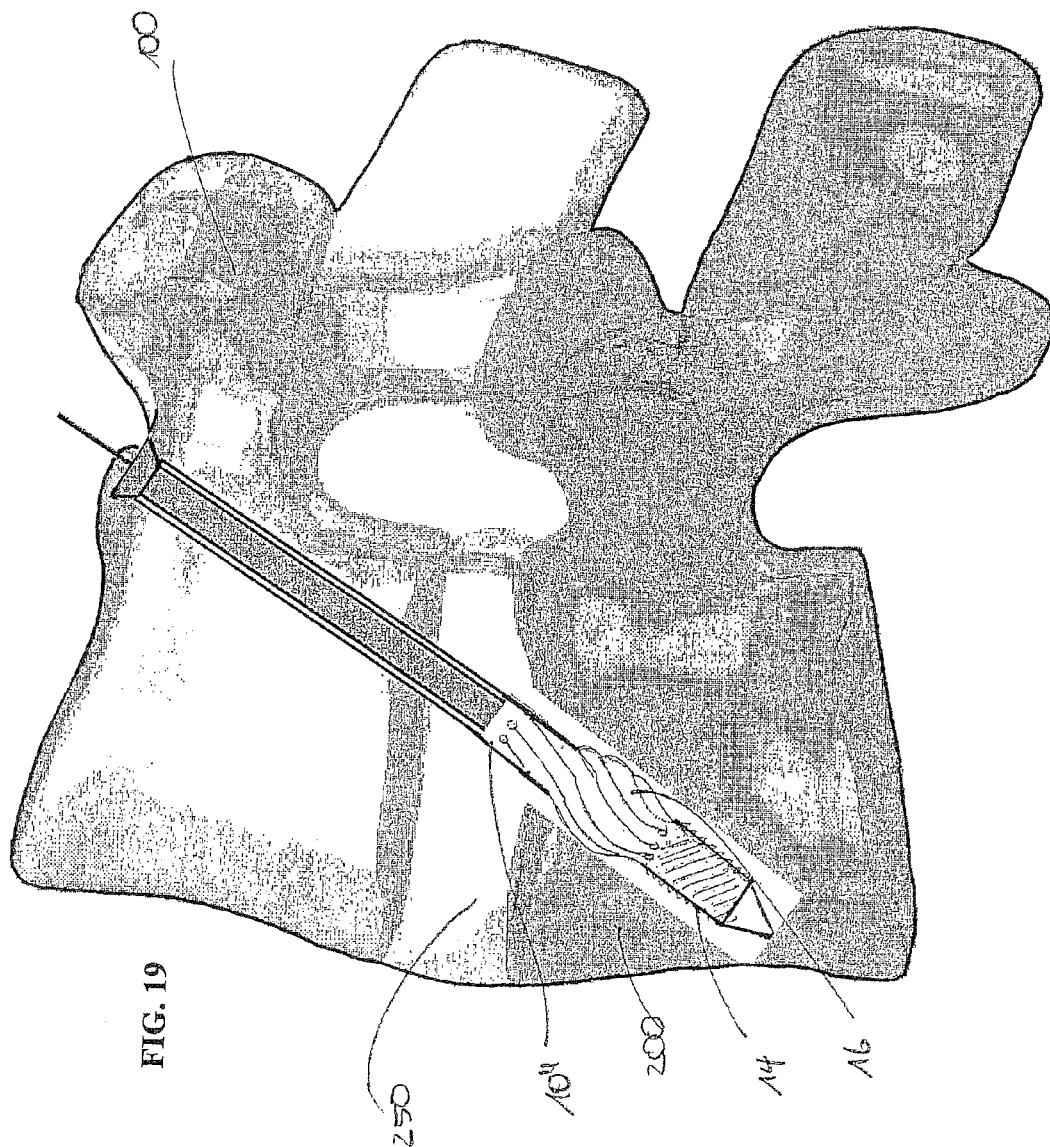
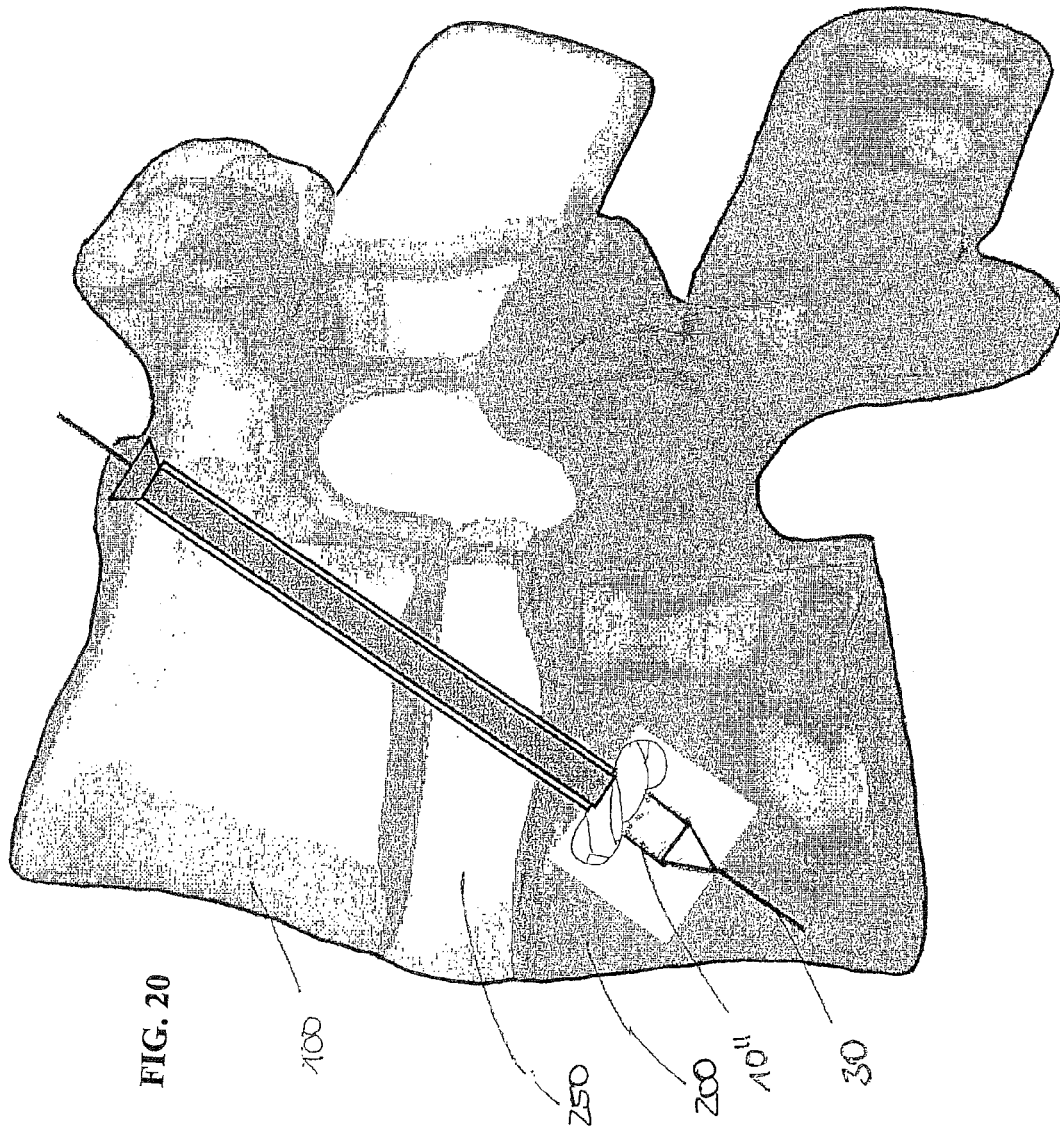
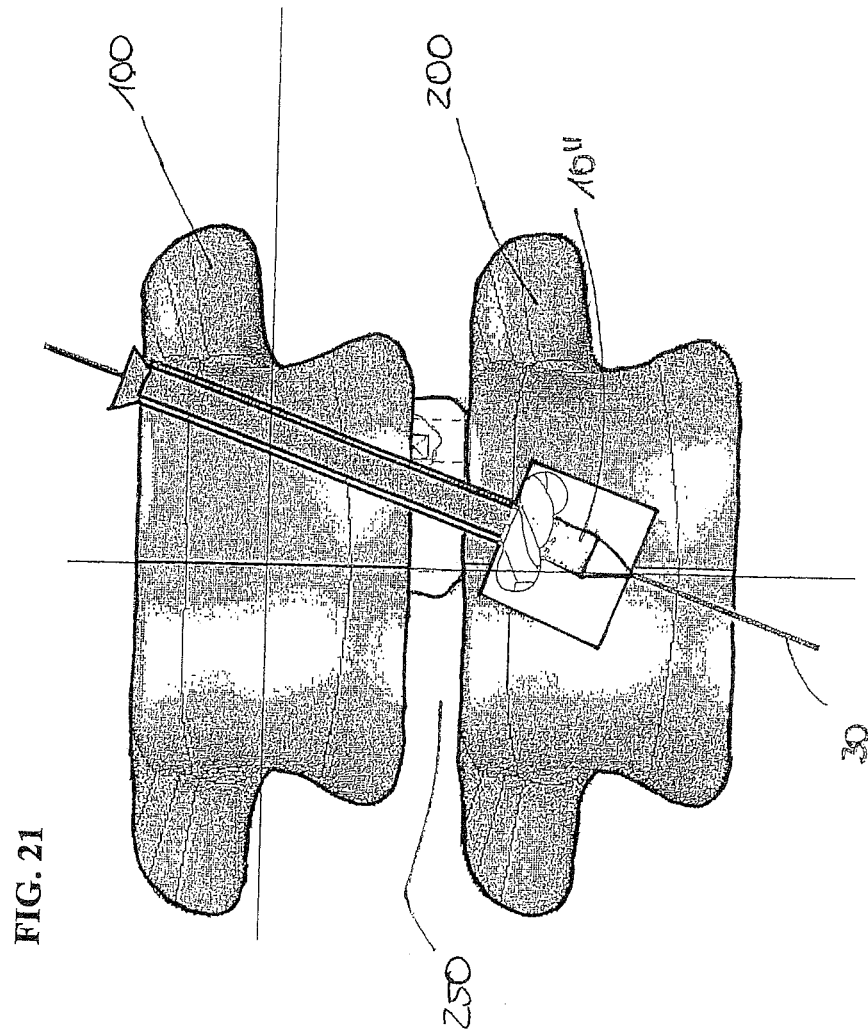


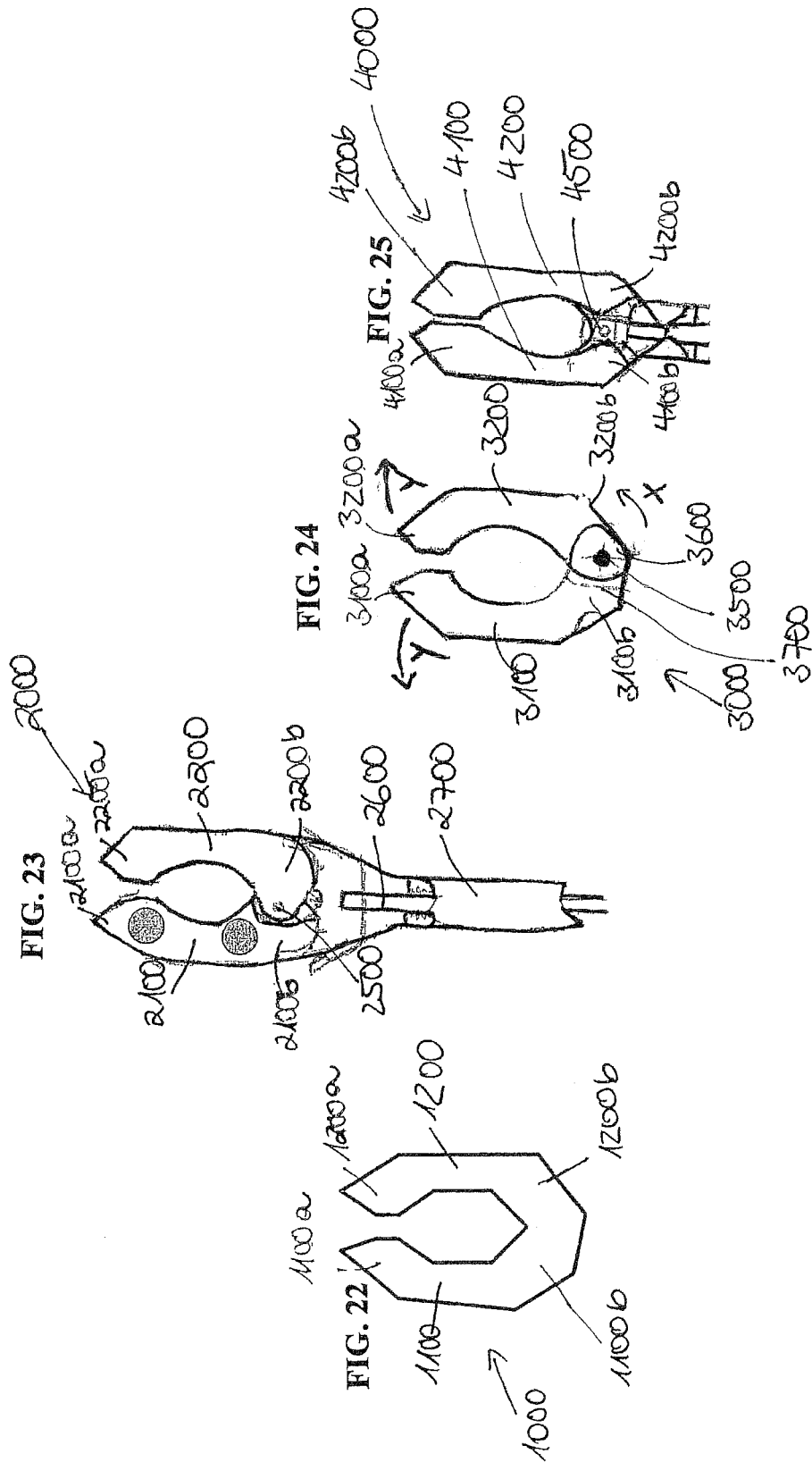
FIG. 18











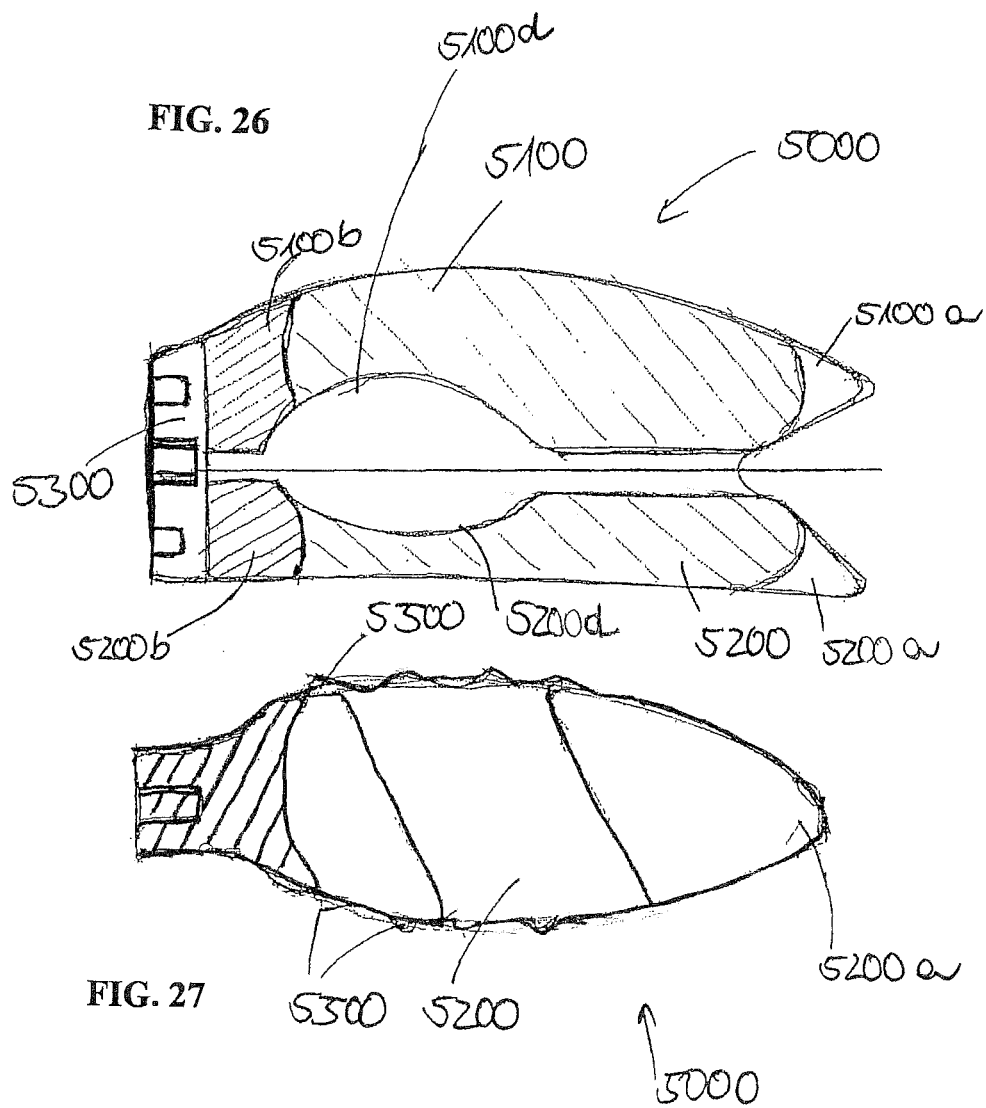
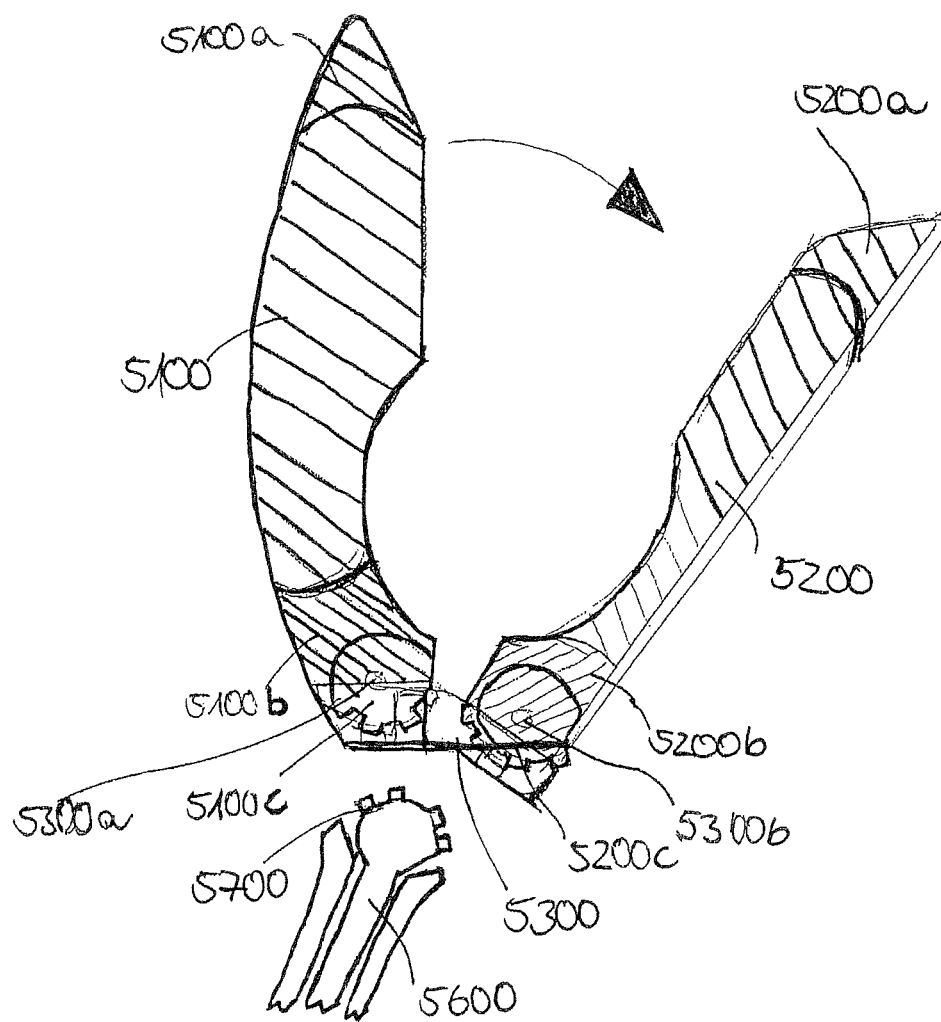
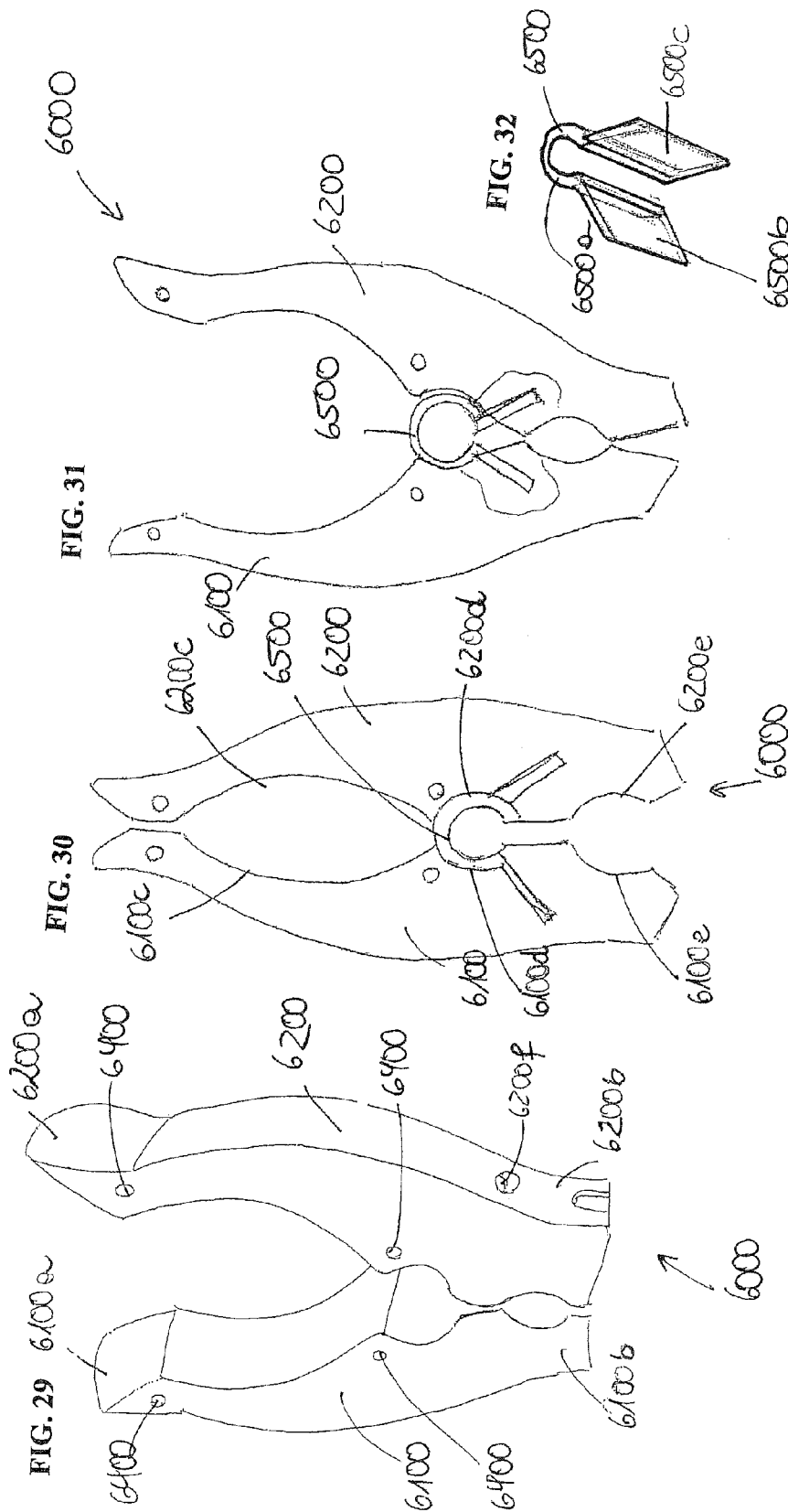
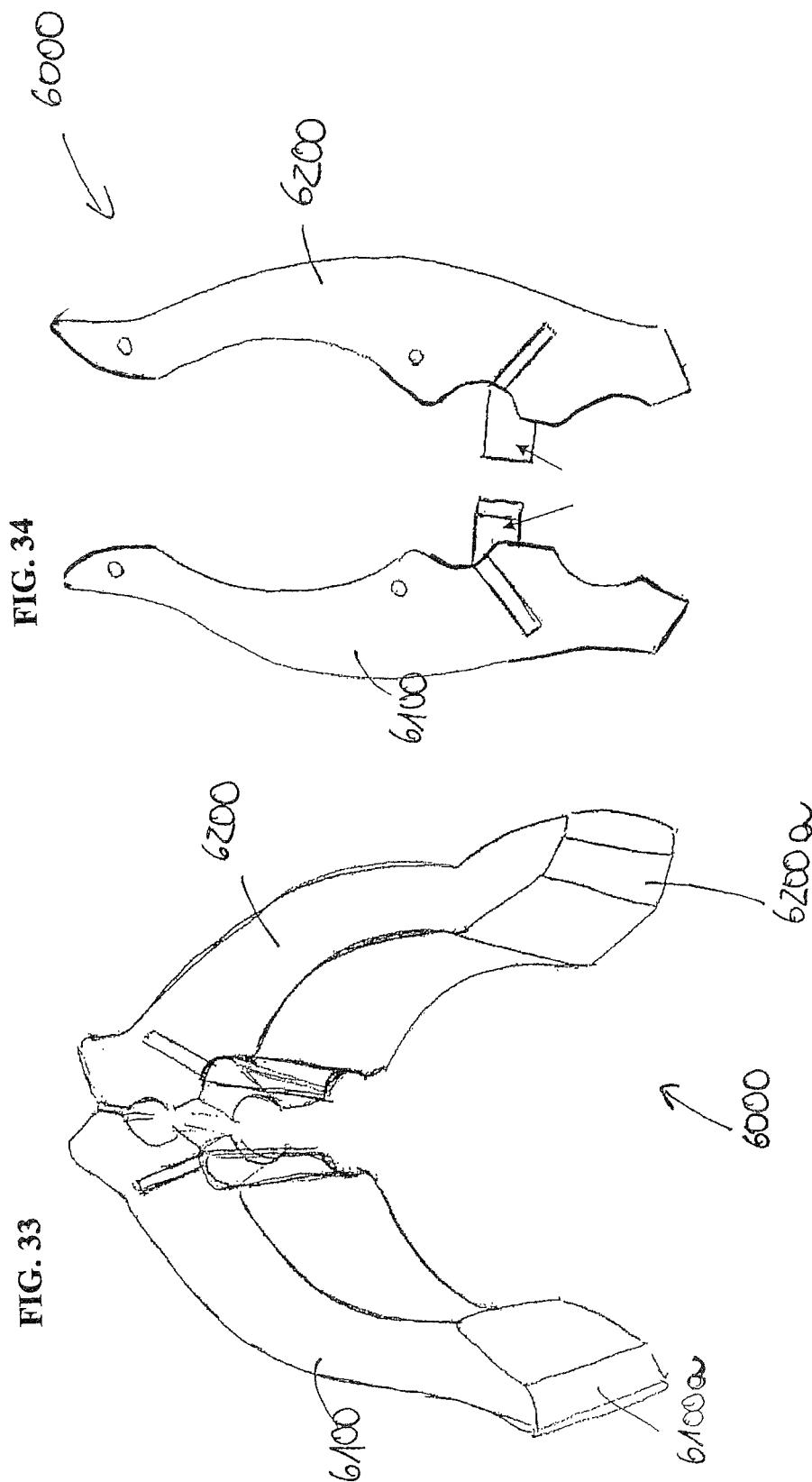


FIG. 28







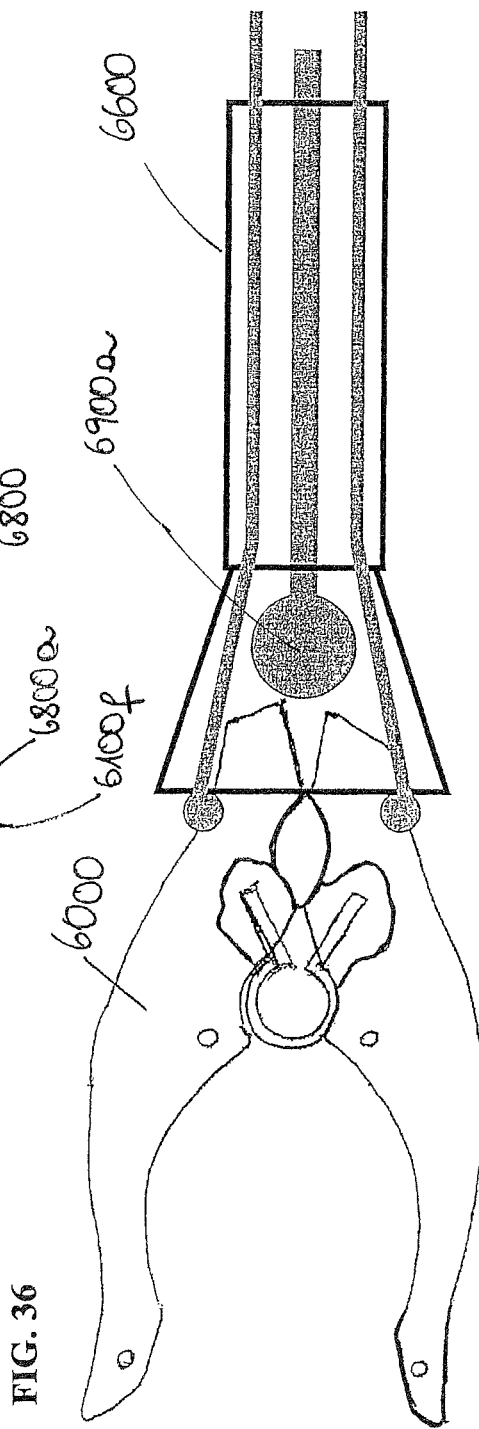
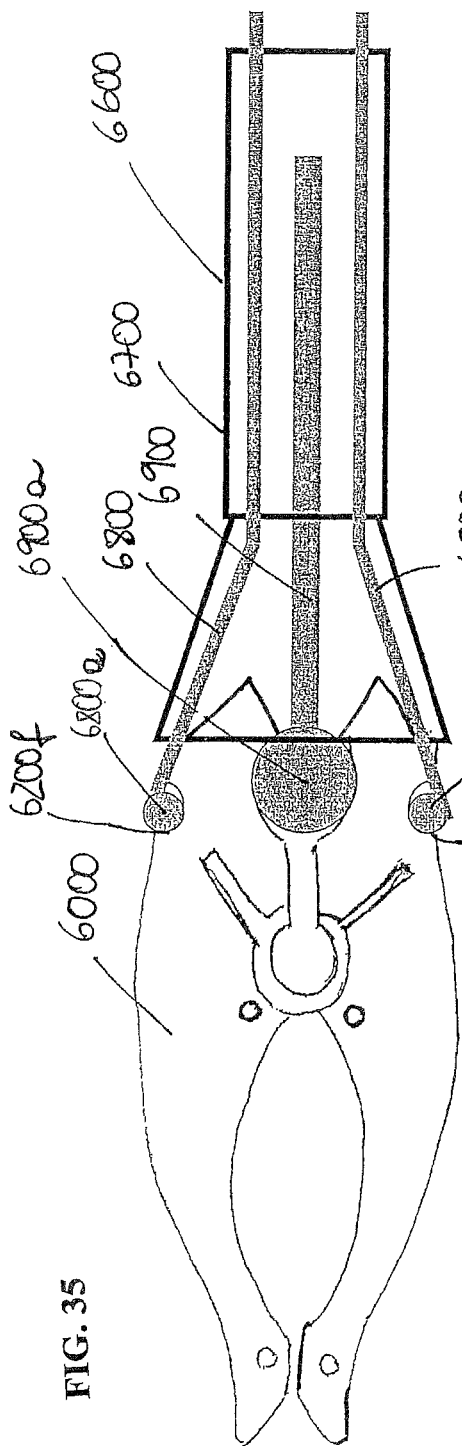


FIG. 37

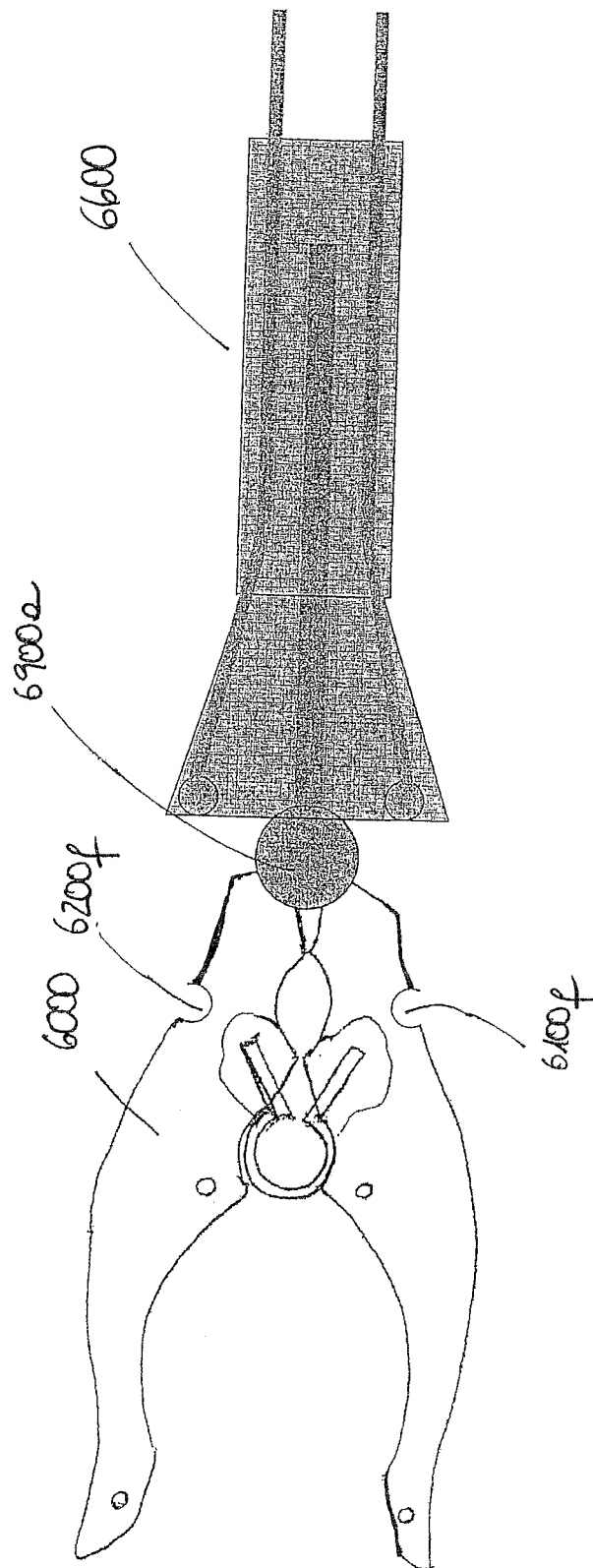


FIG. 38

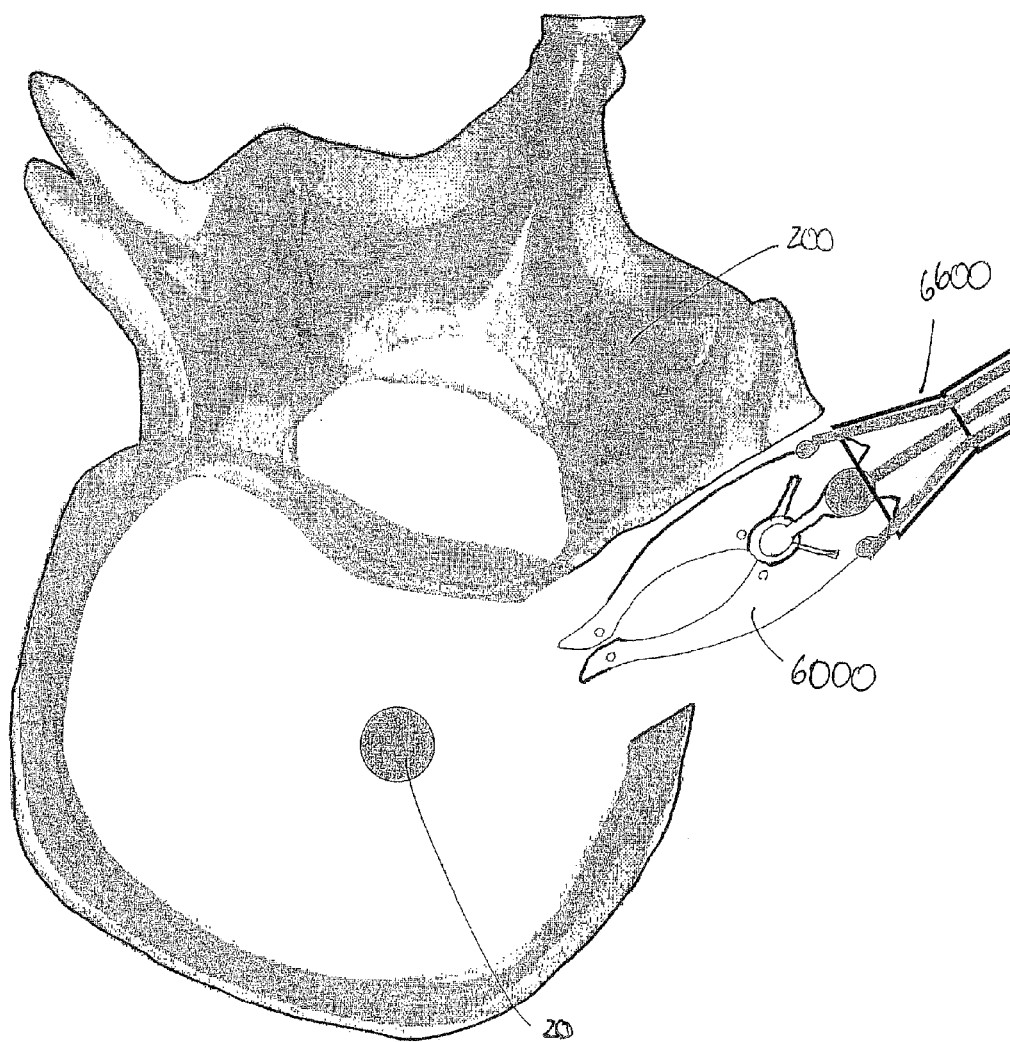


FIG. 39

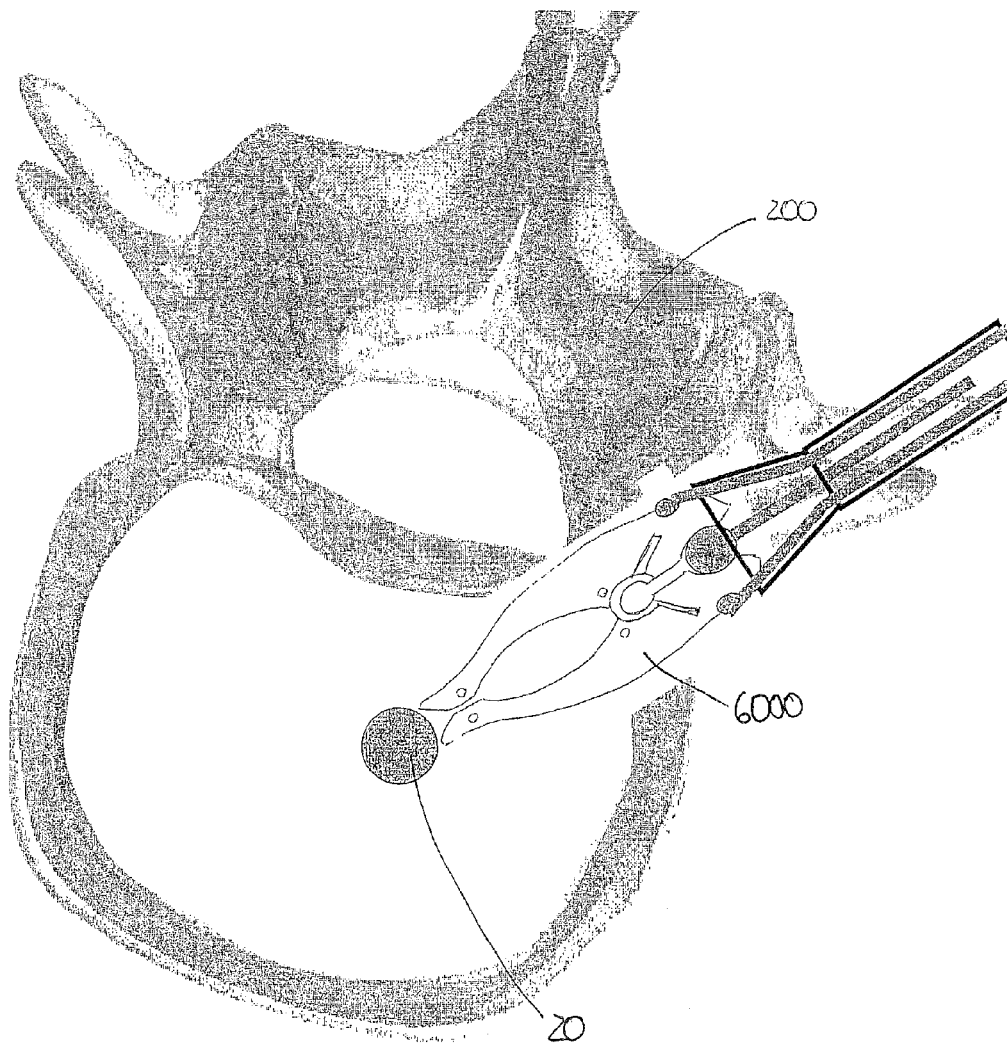


FIG. 40

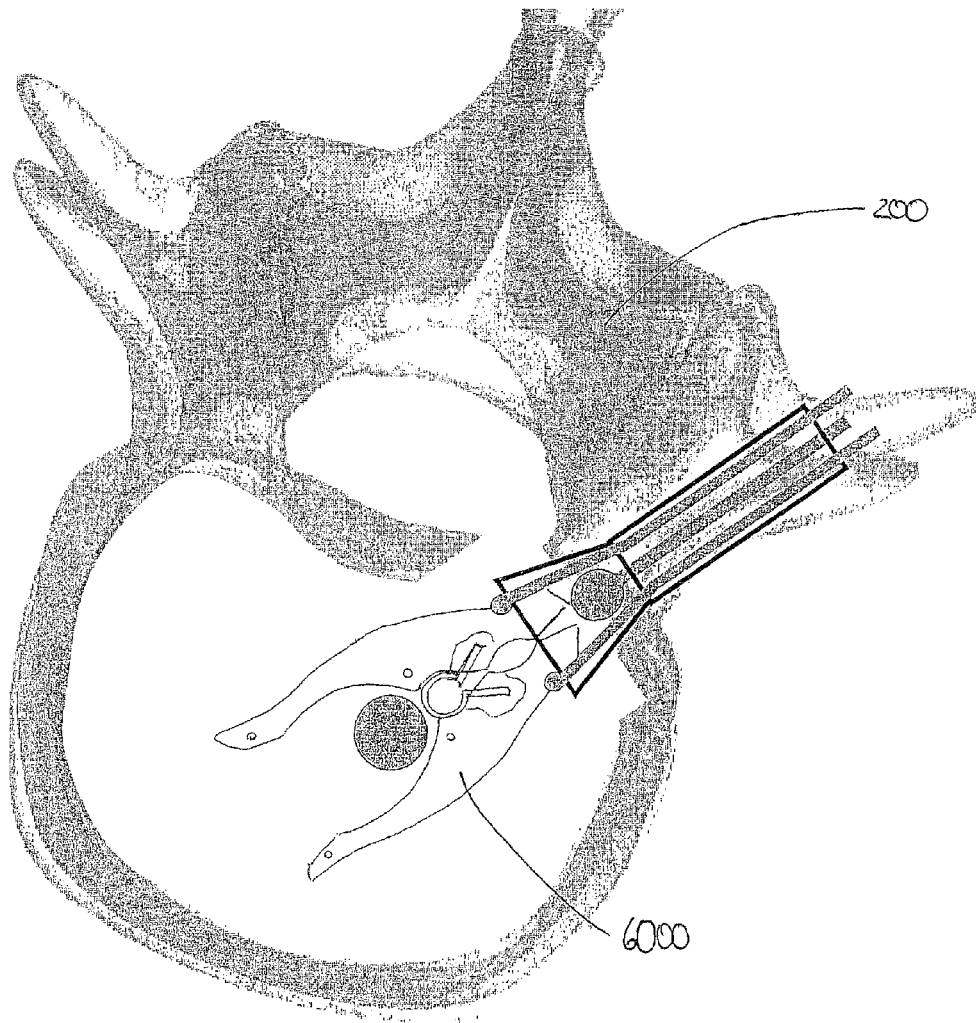


FIG. 41

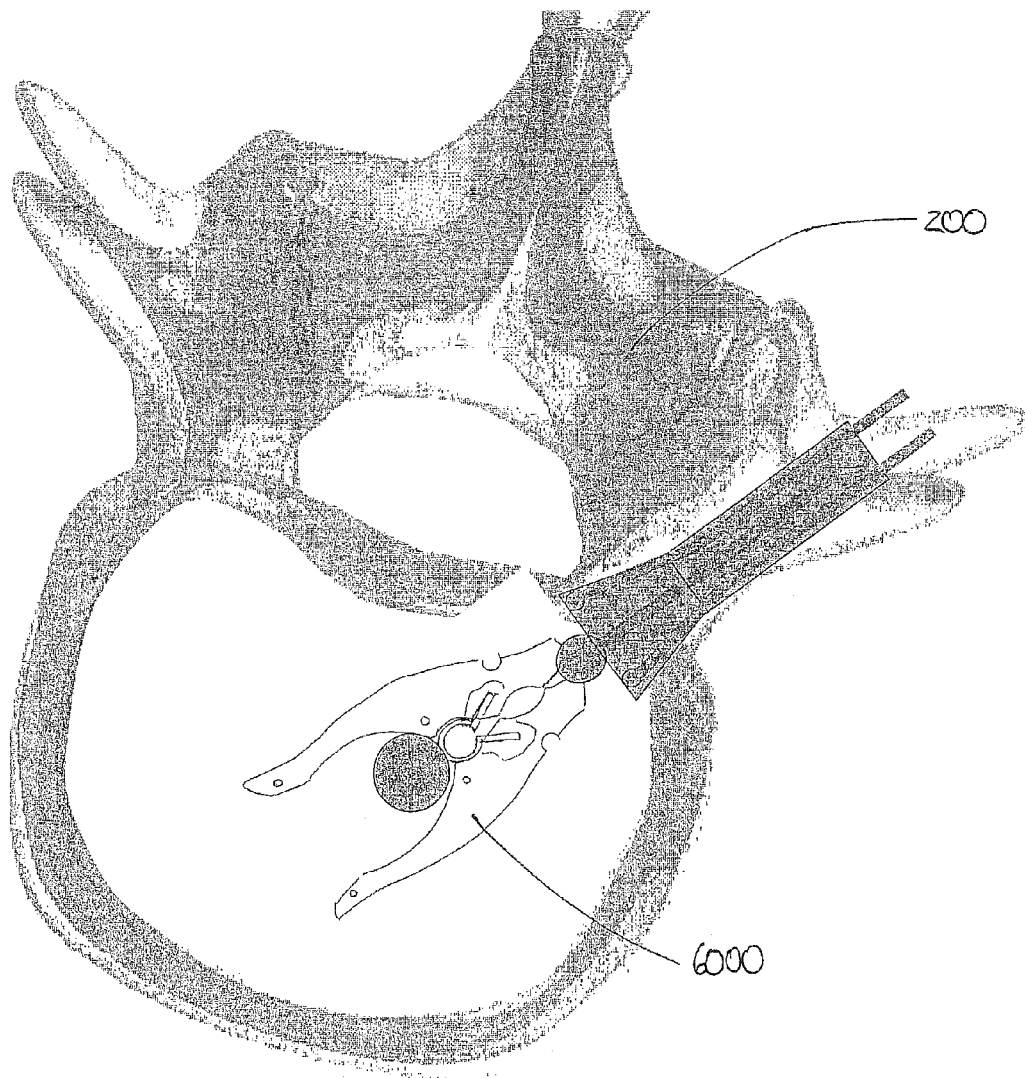


FIG. 42

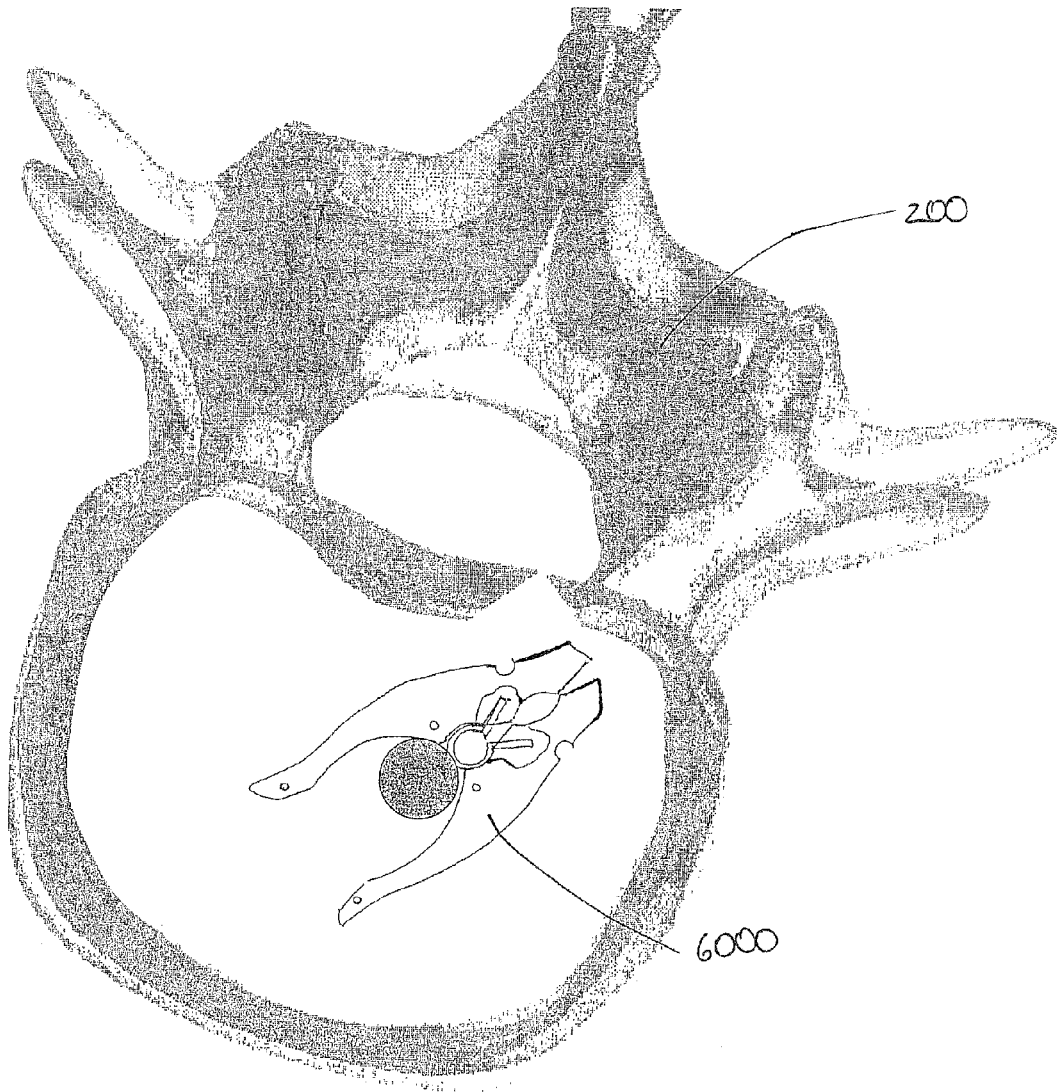


FIG. 43

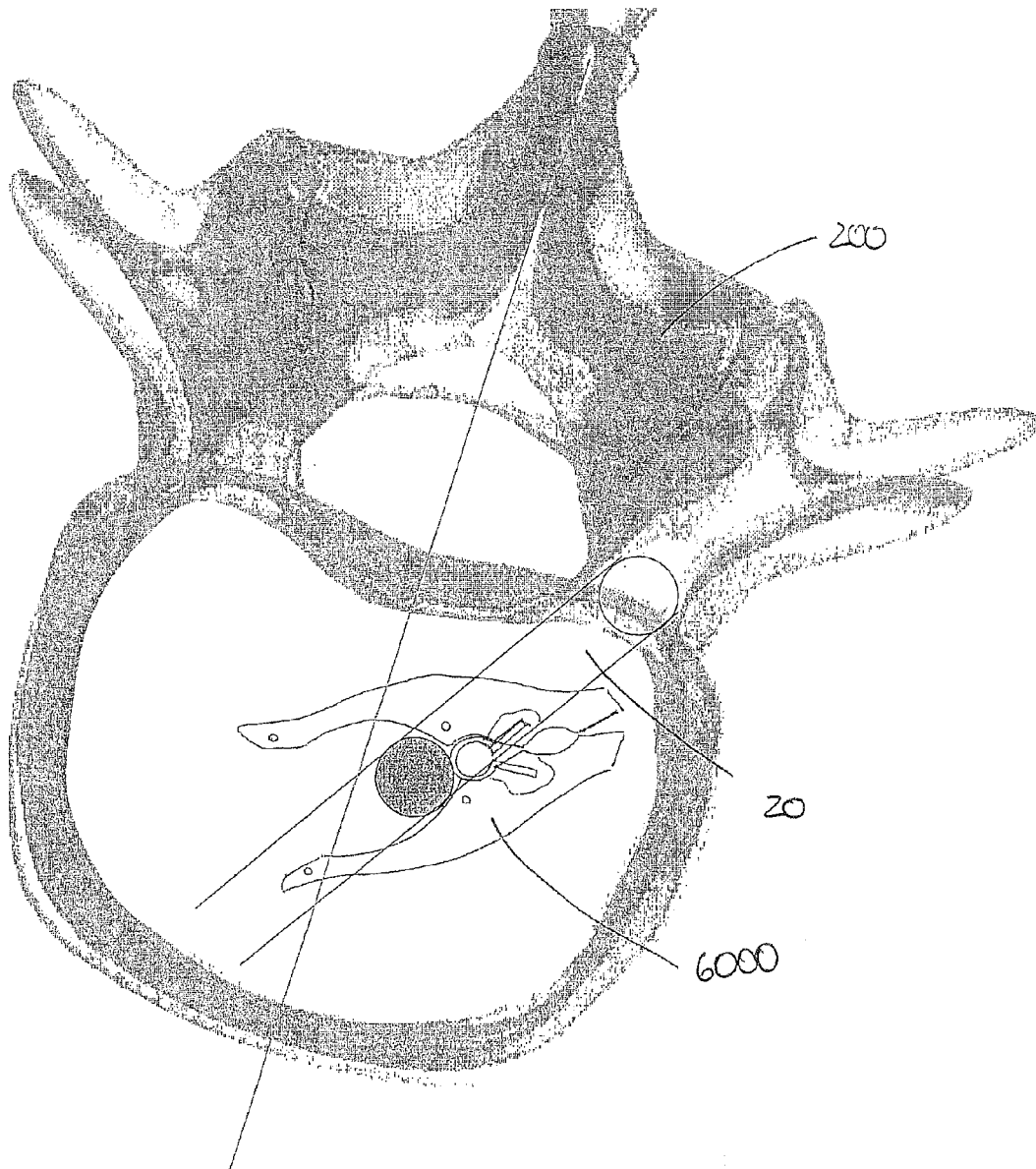
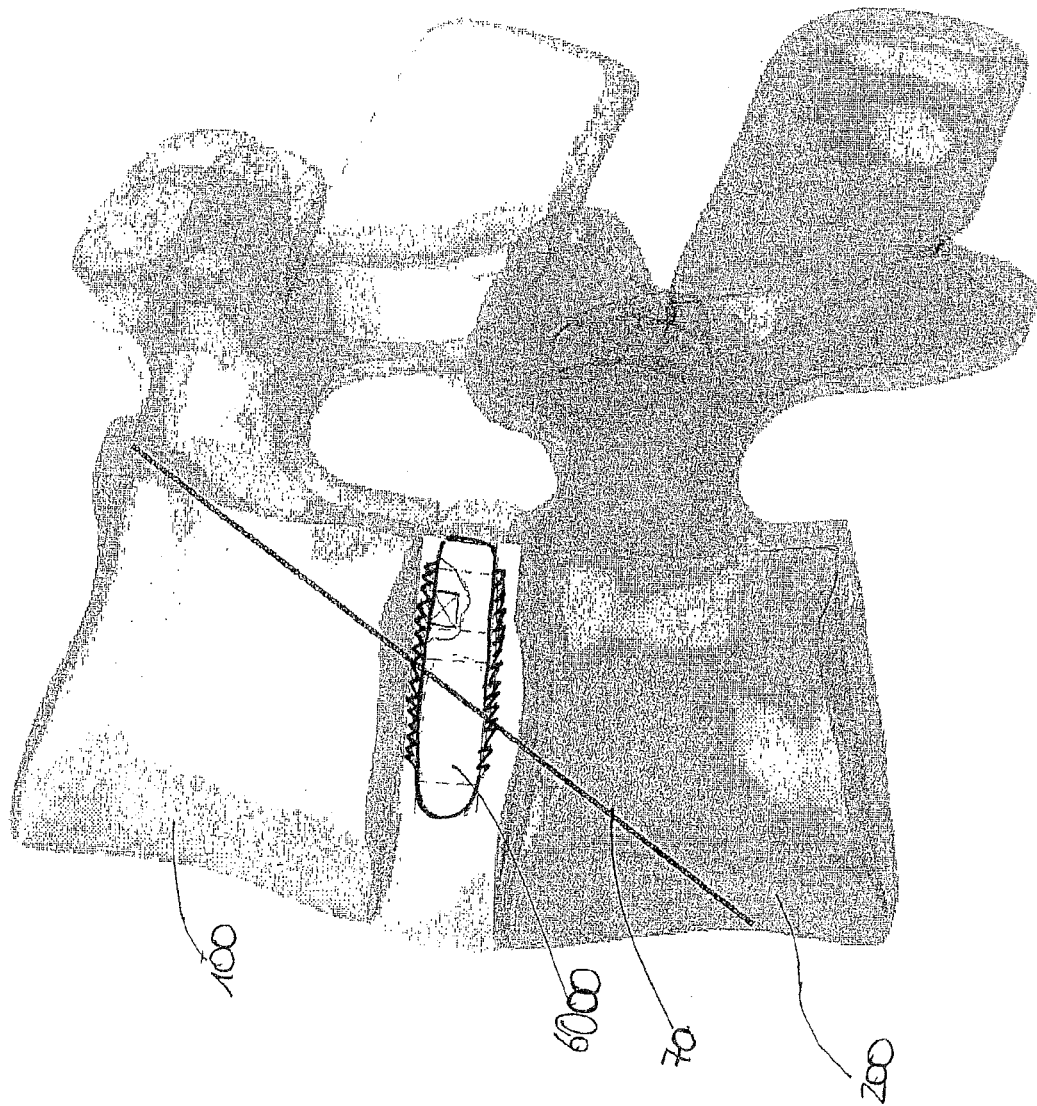


FIG. 44



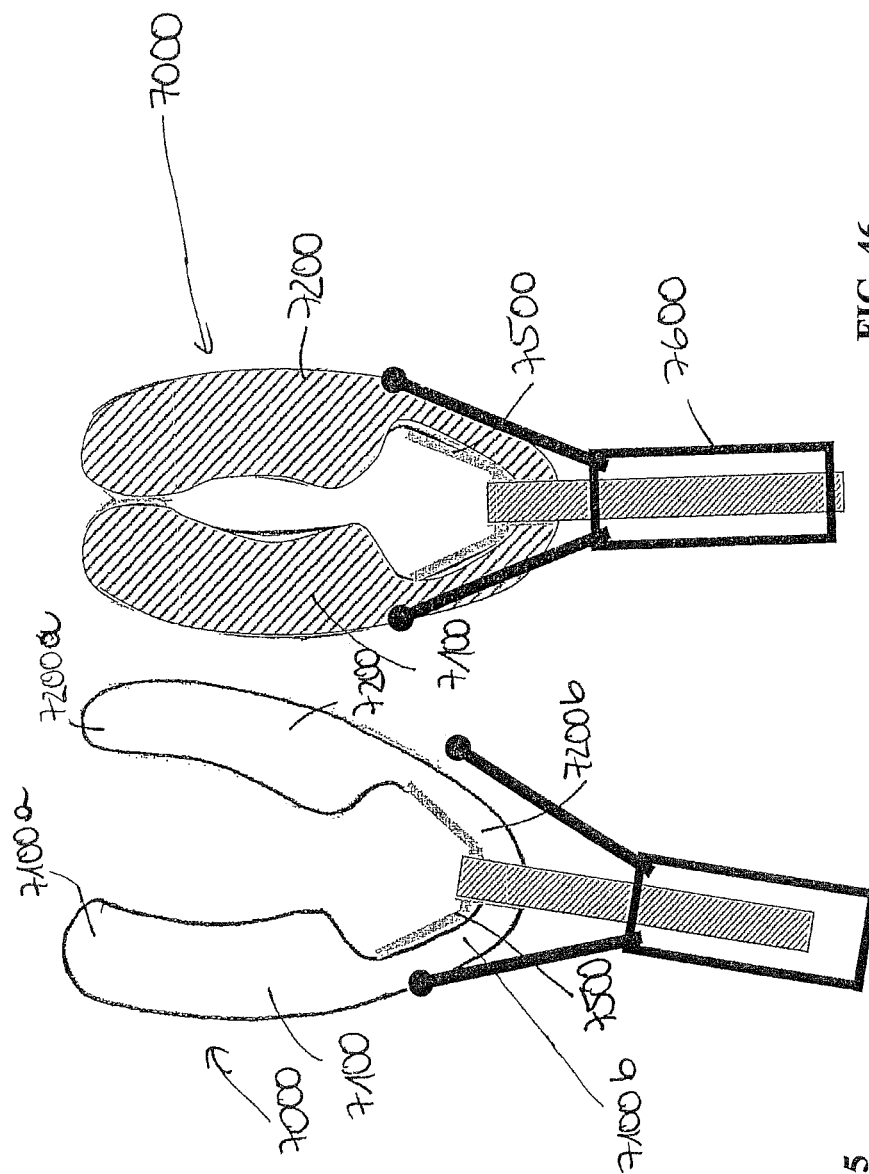


FIG. 45

FIG. 46

FIG. 47

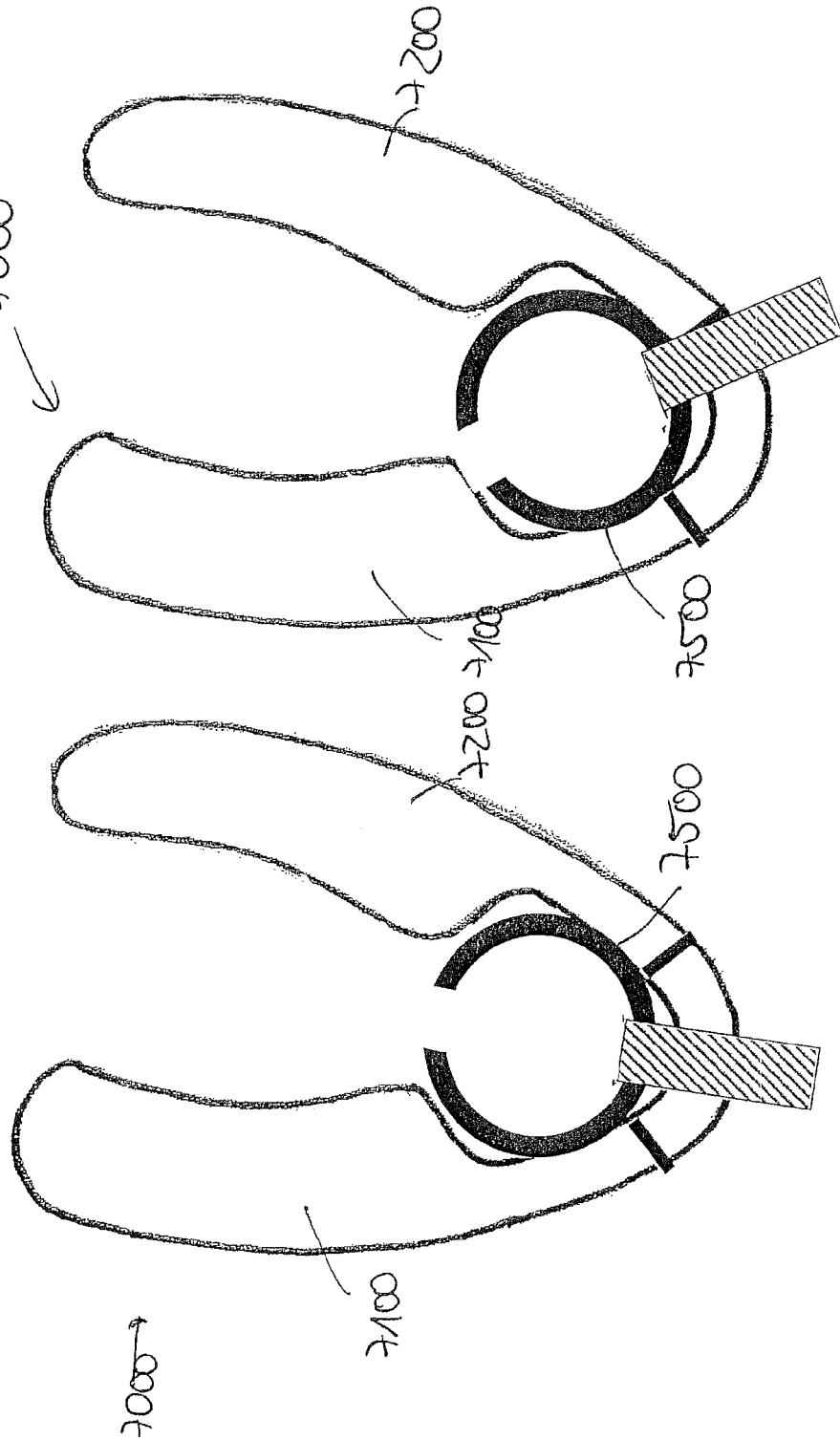
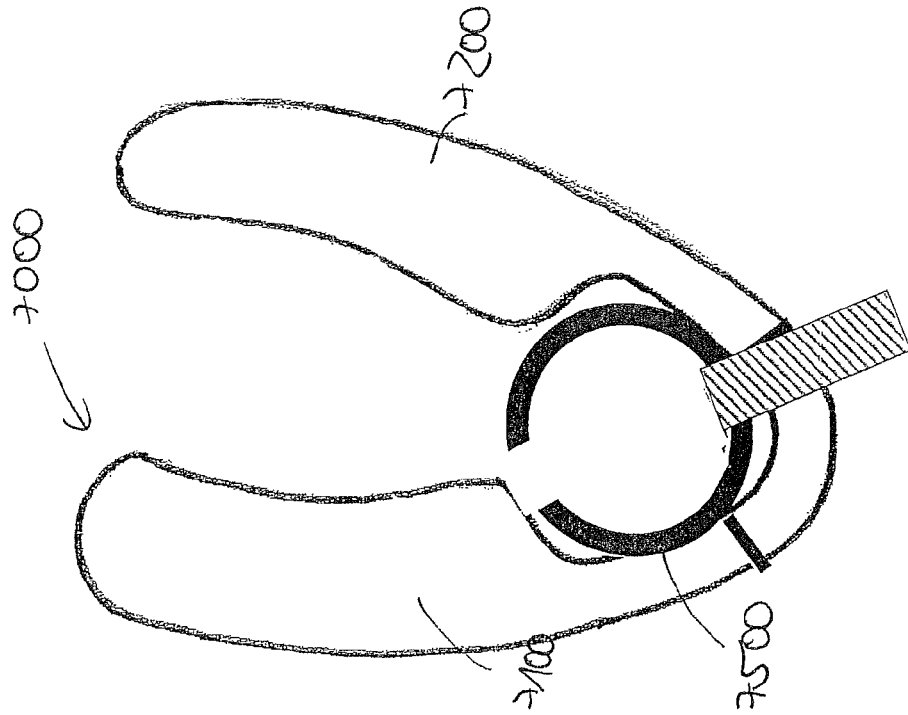


FIG. 48



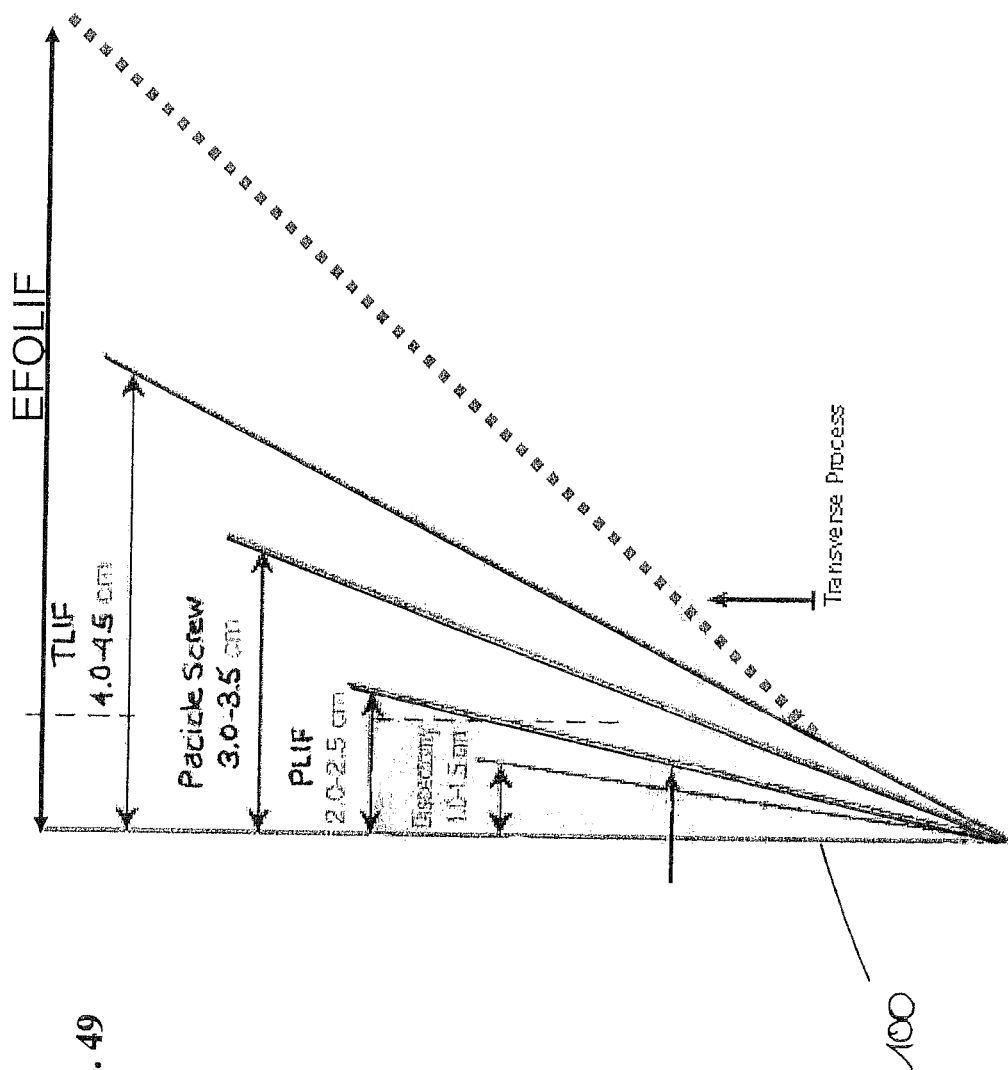
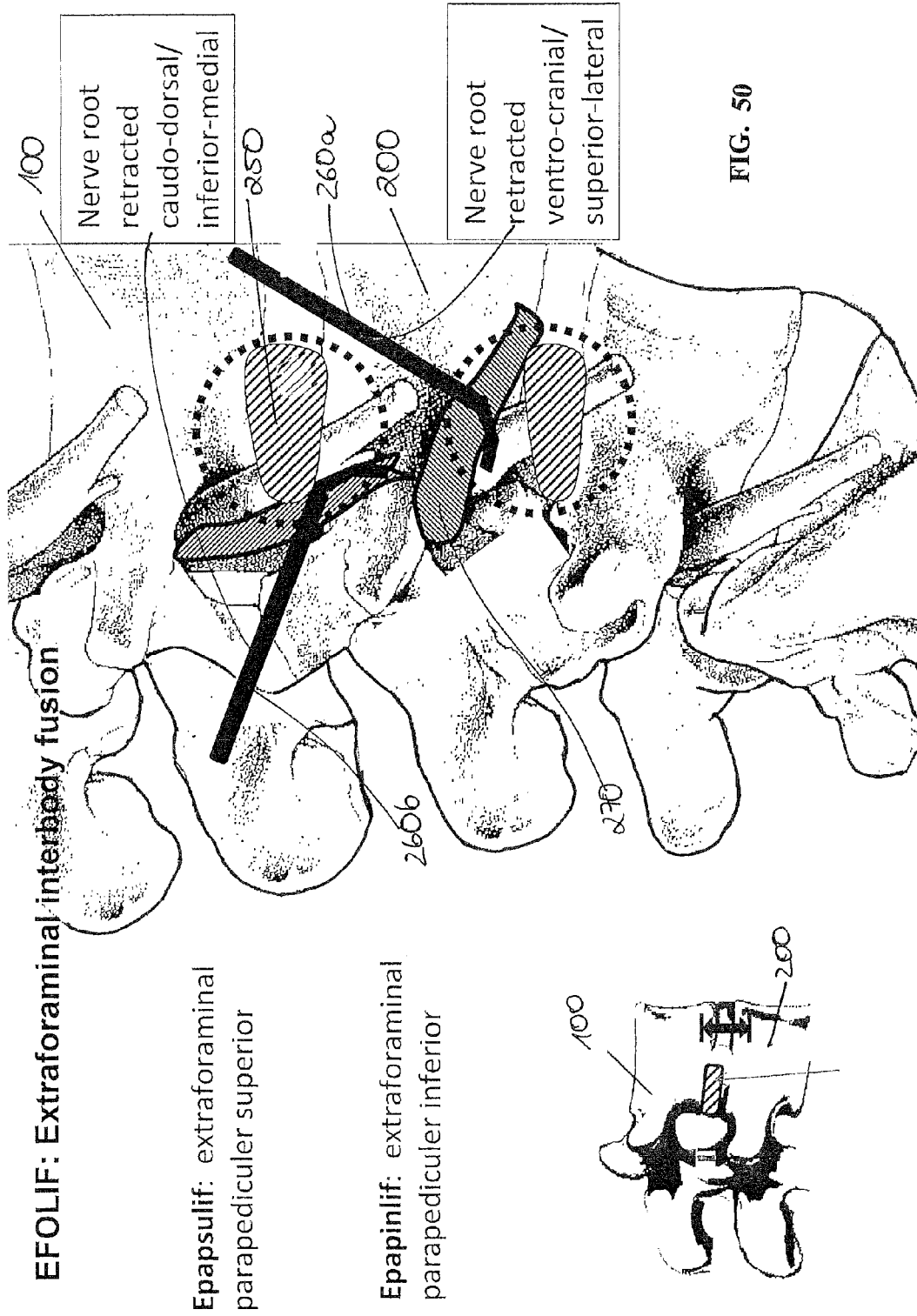


FIG. 49



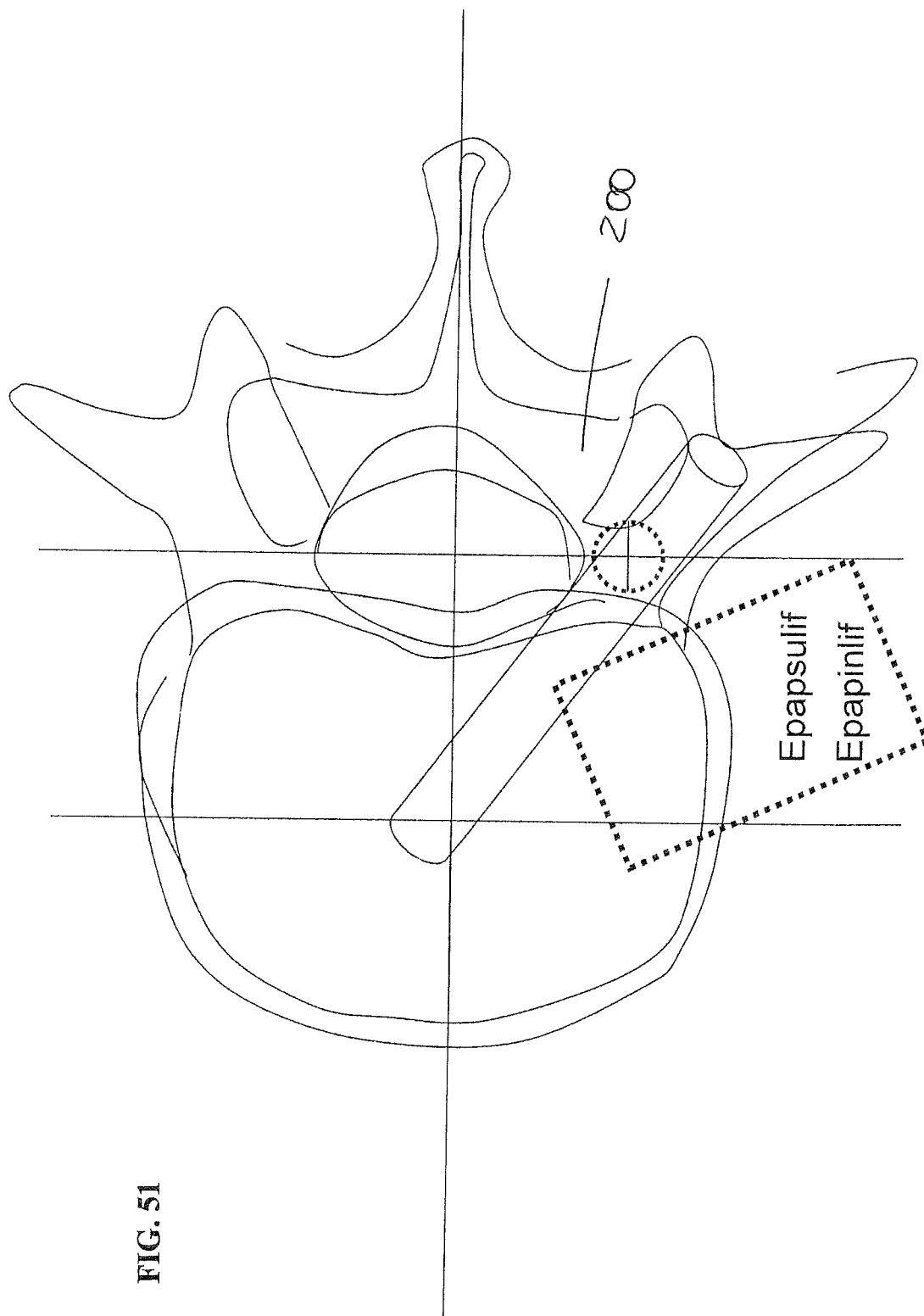


FIG. 52

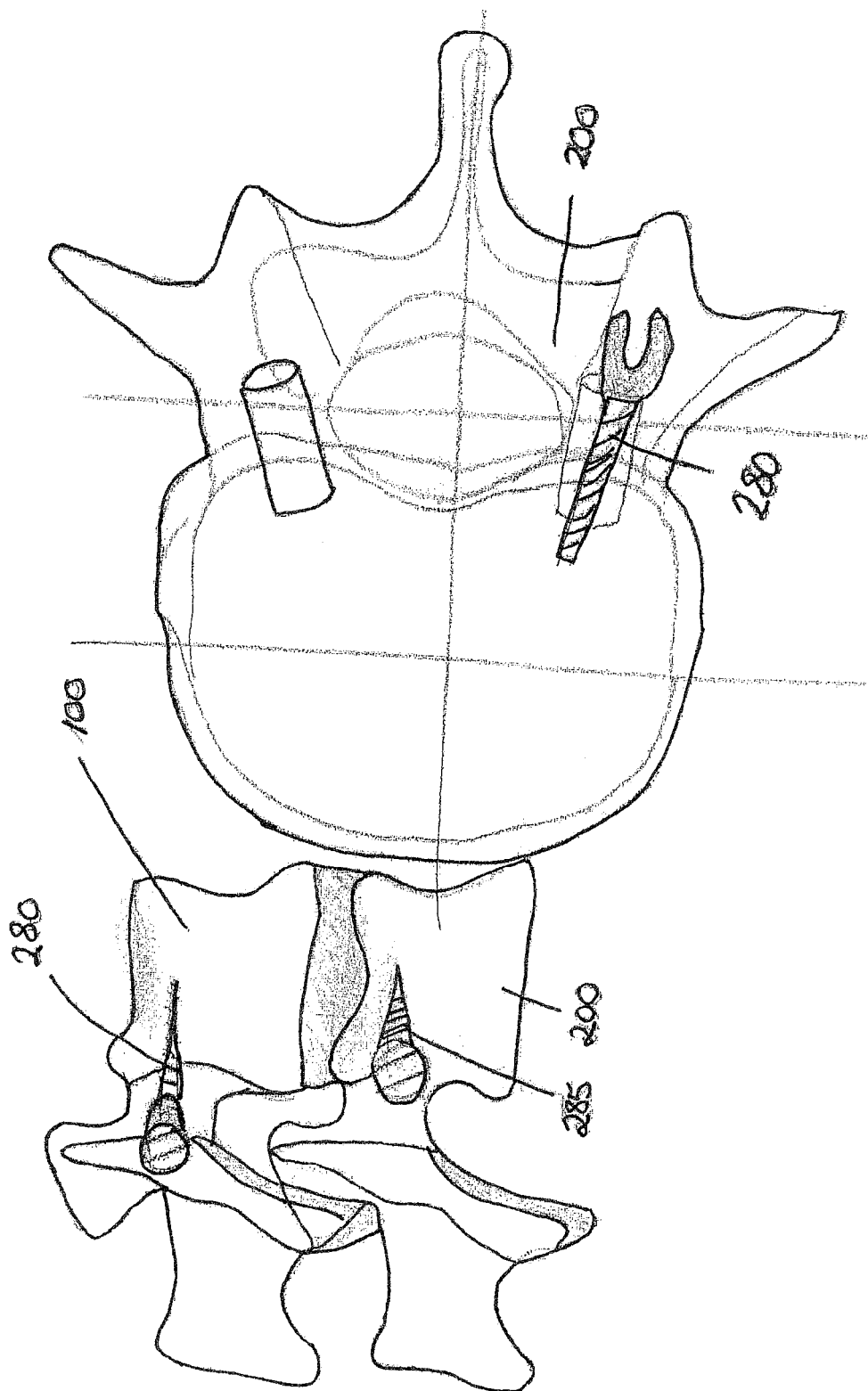


FIG. 53

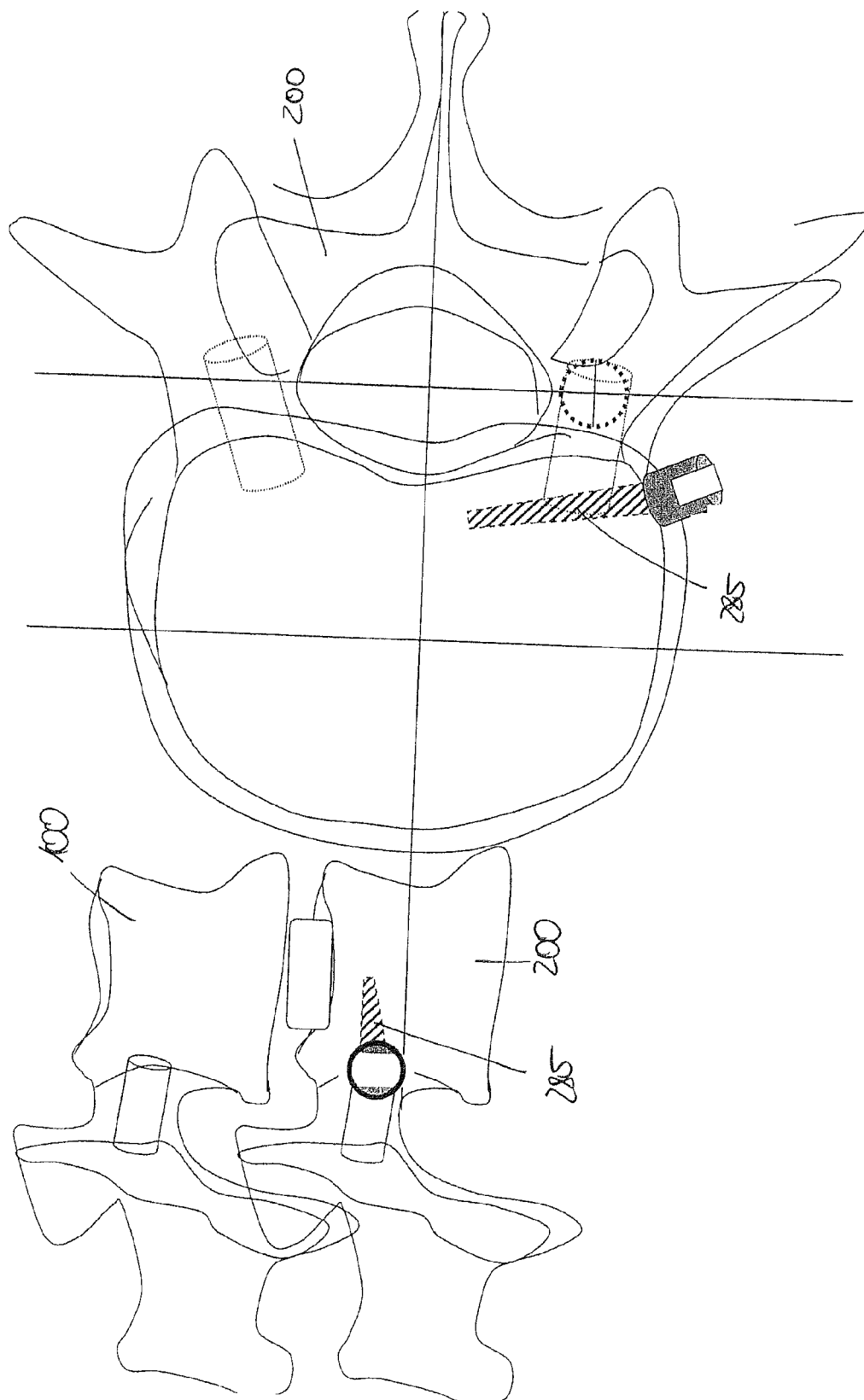


FIG. 54B

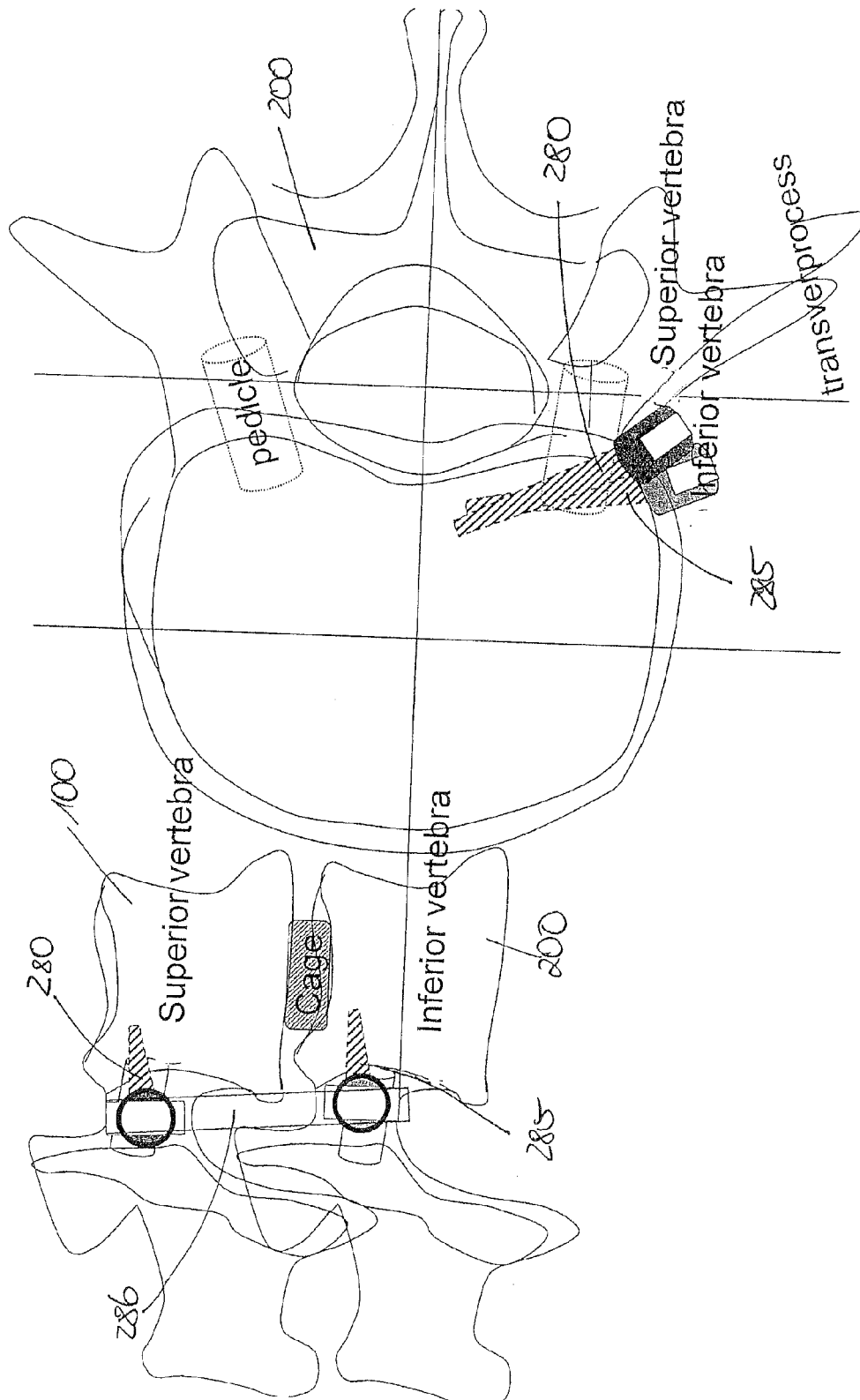


FIG. 55

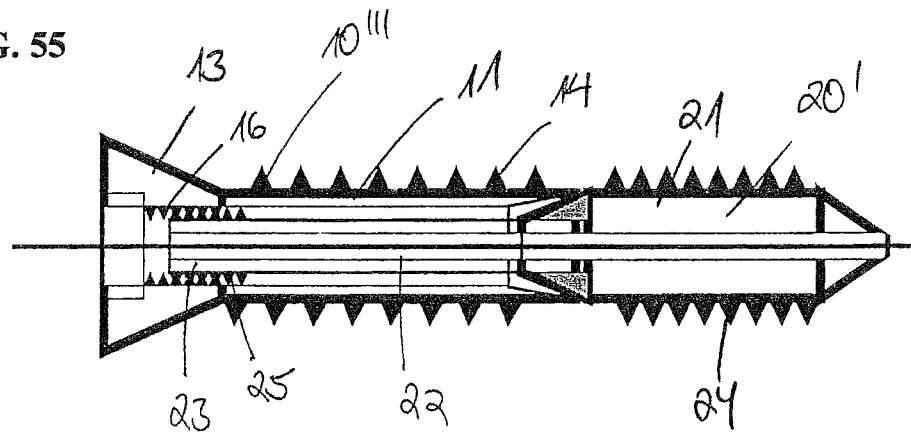


FIG. 56

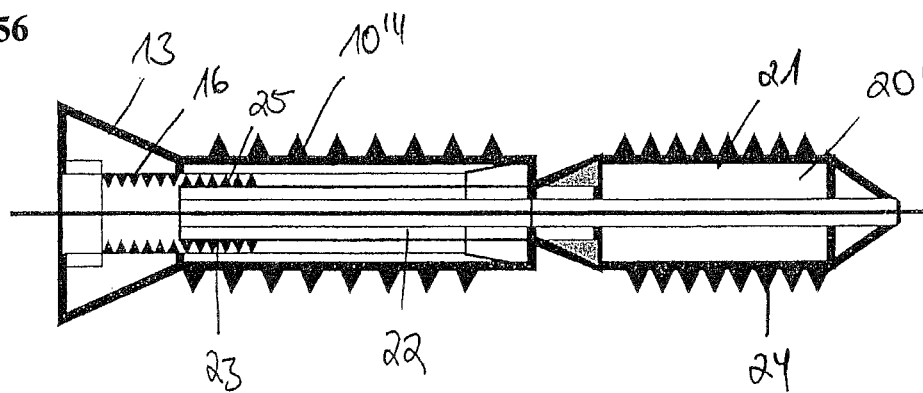
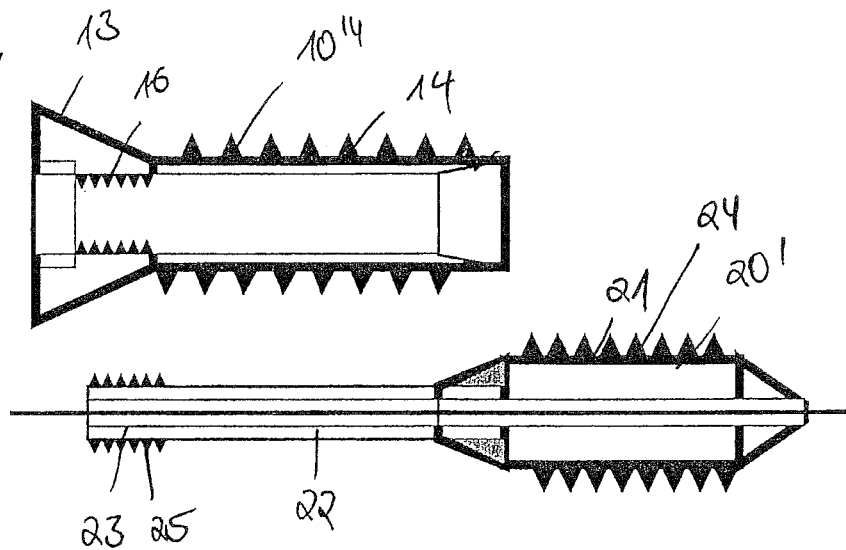


FIG. 57



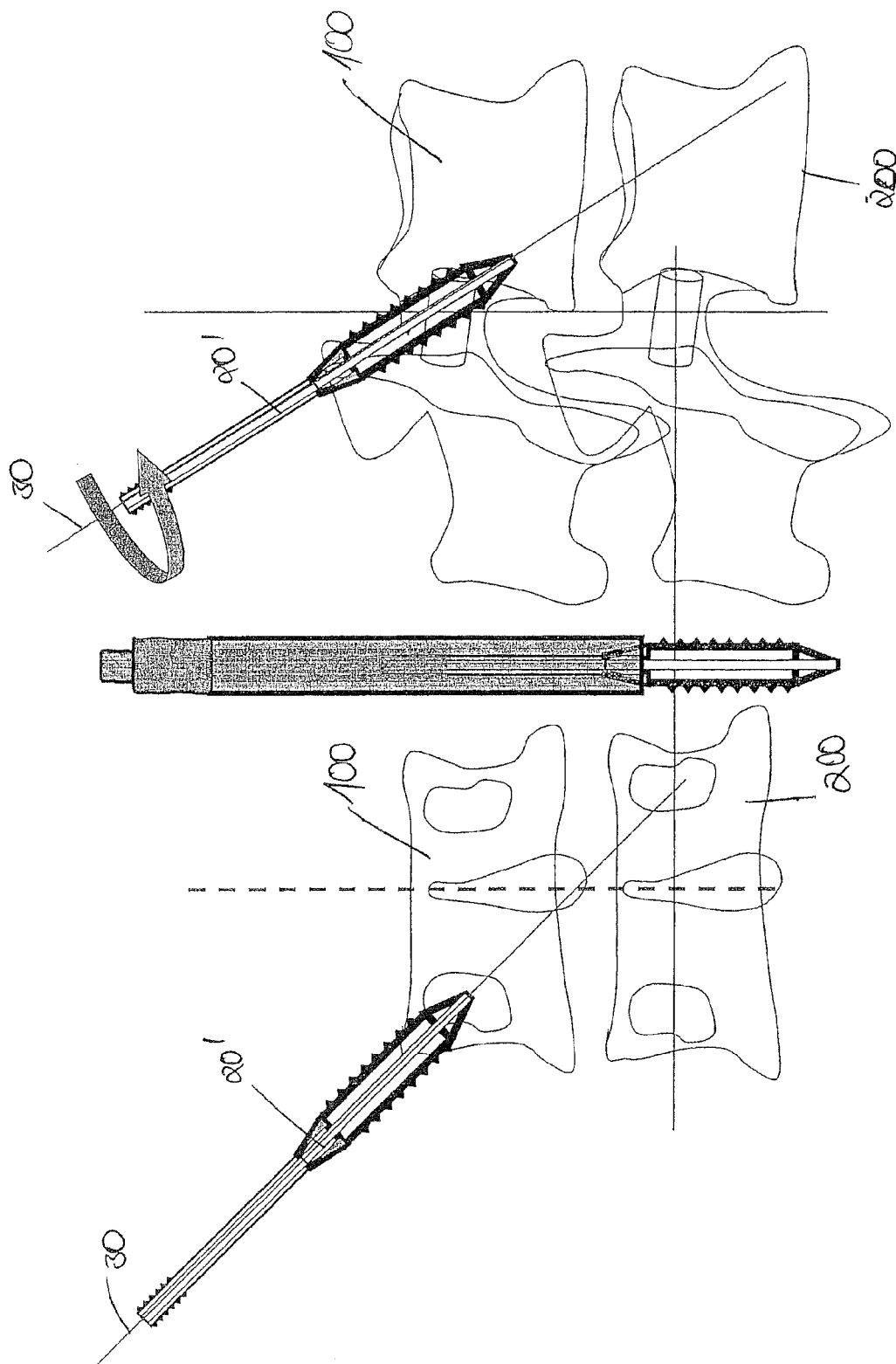


FIG. 58

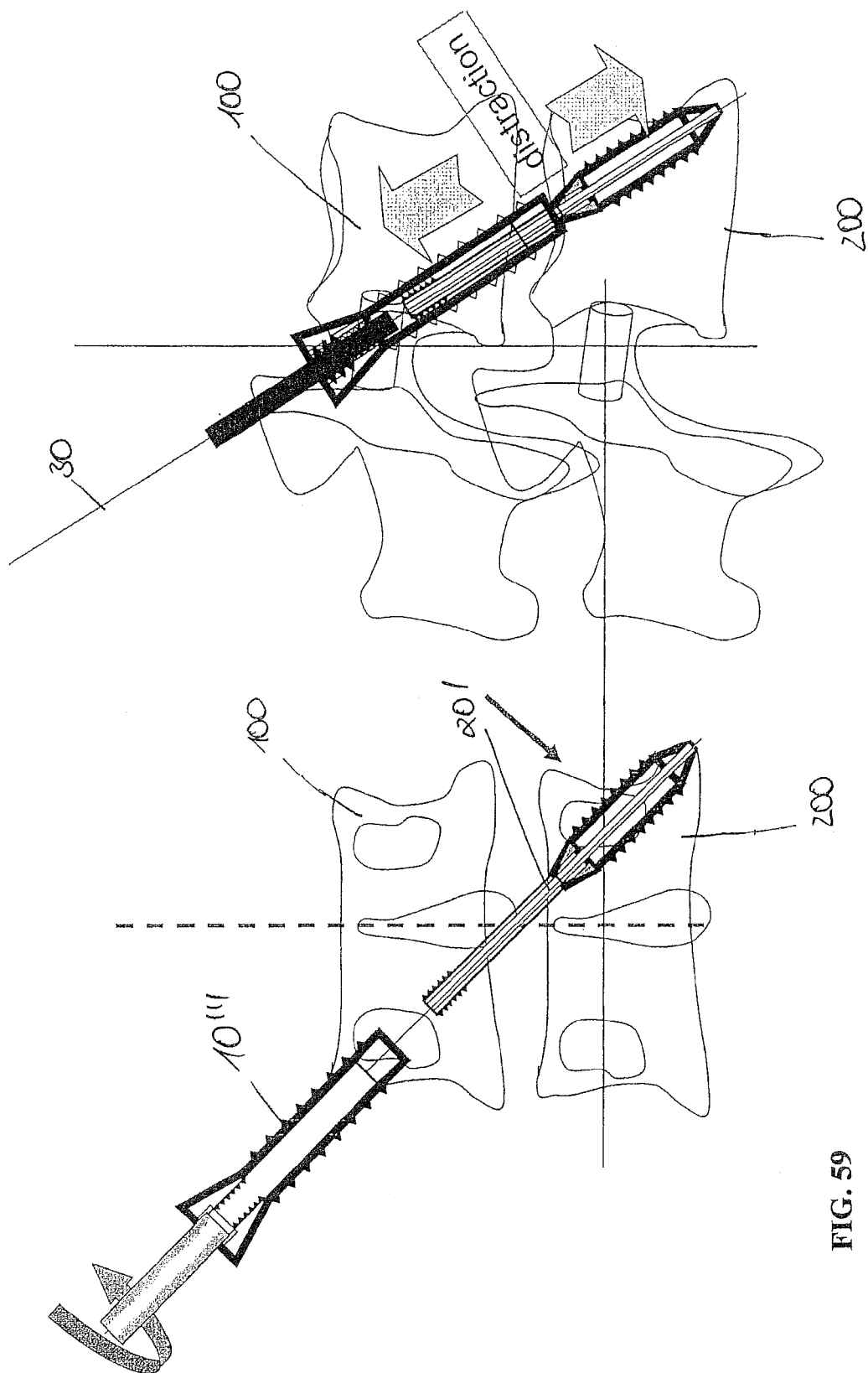


FIG. 59

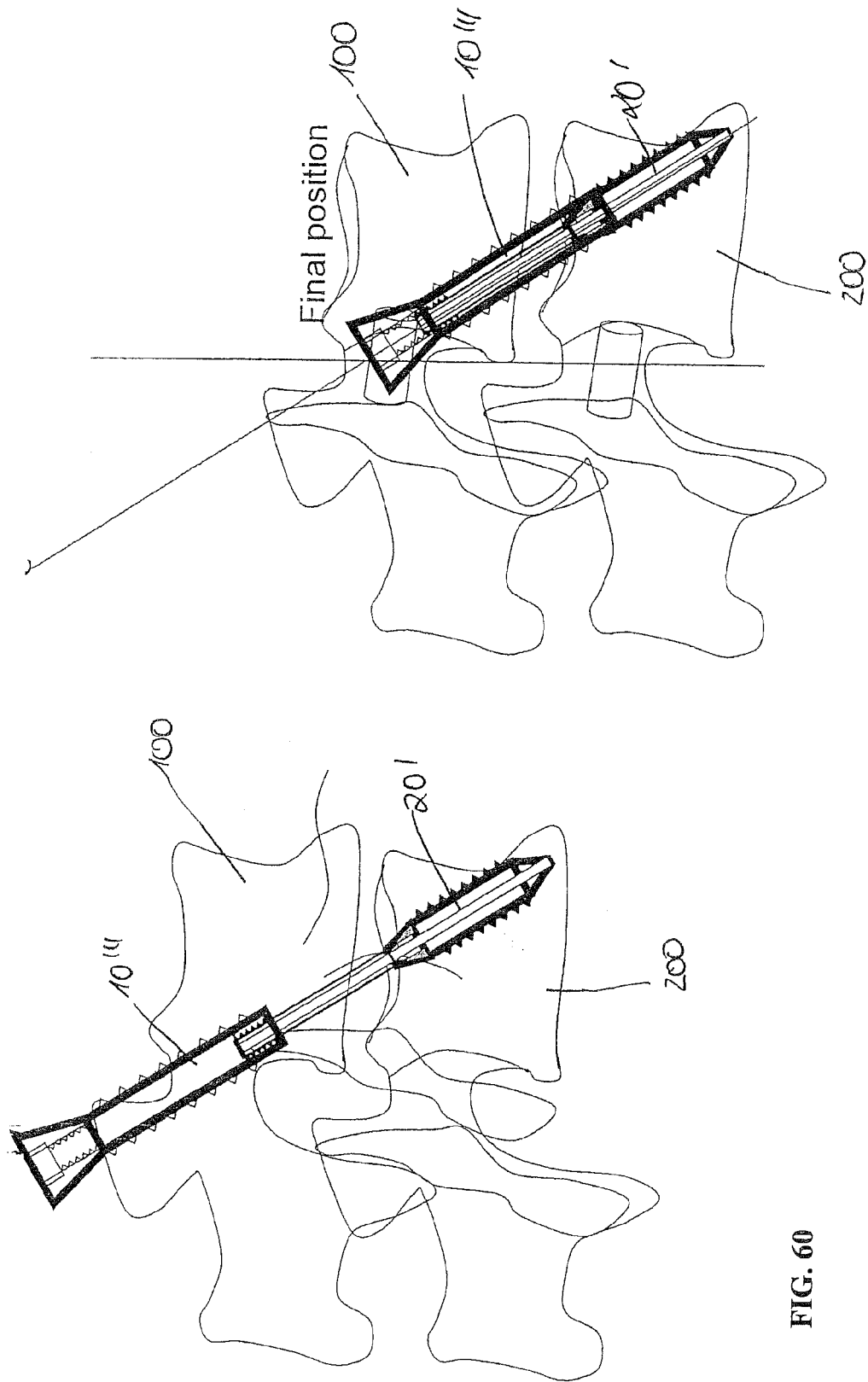


FIG. 60

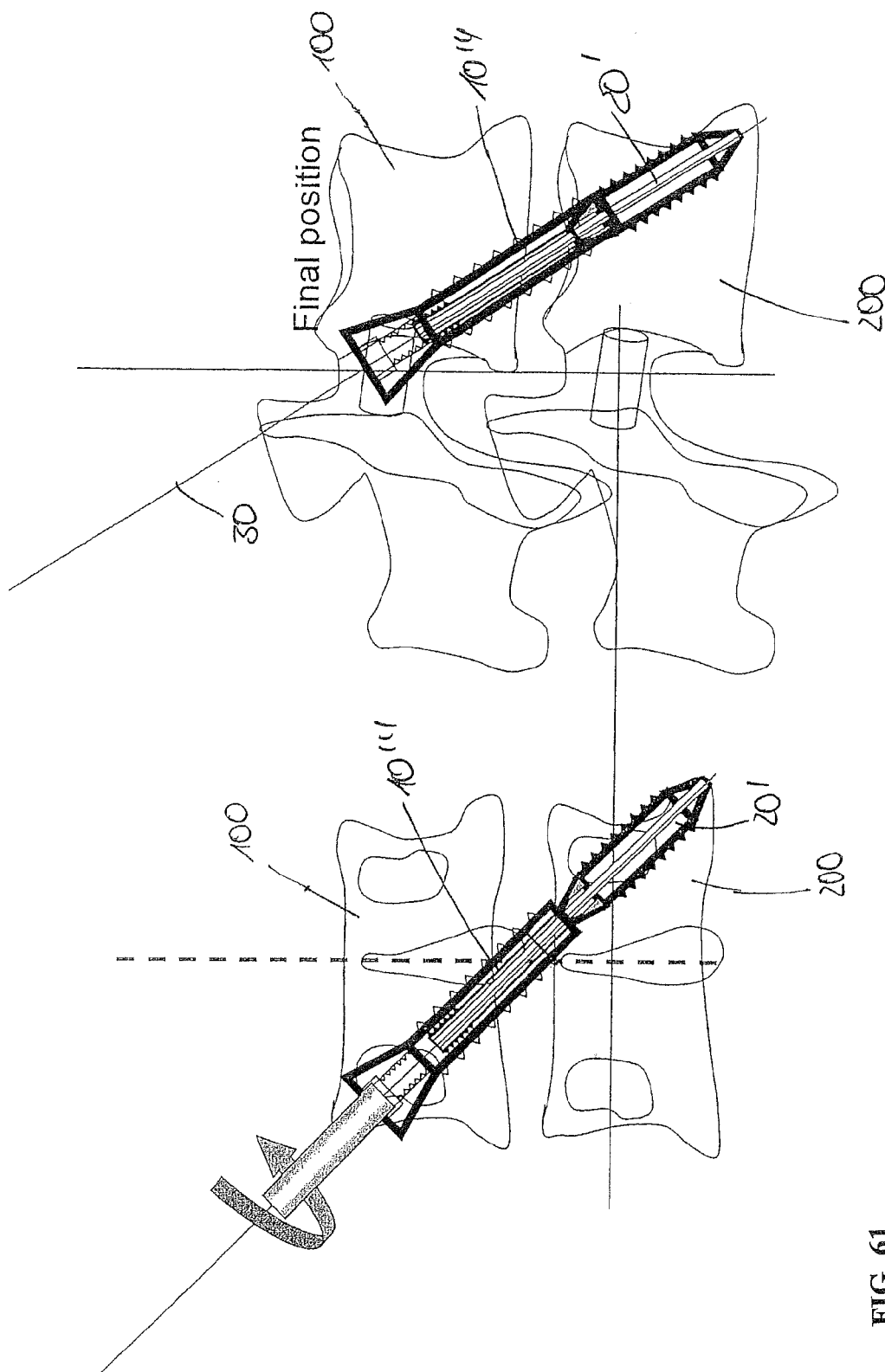


FIG. 61

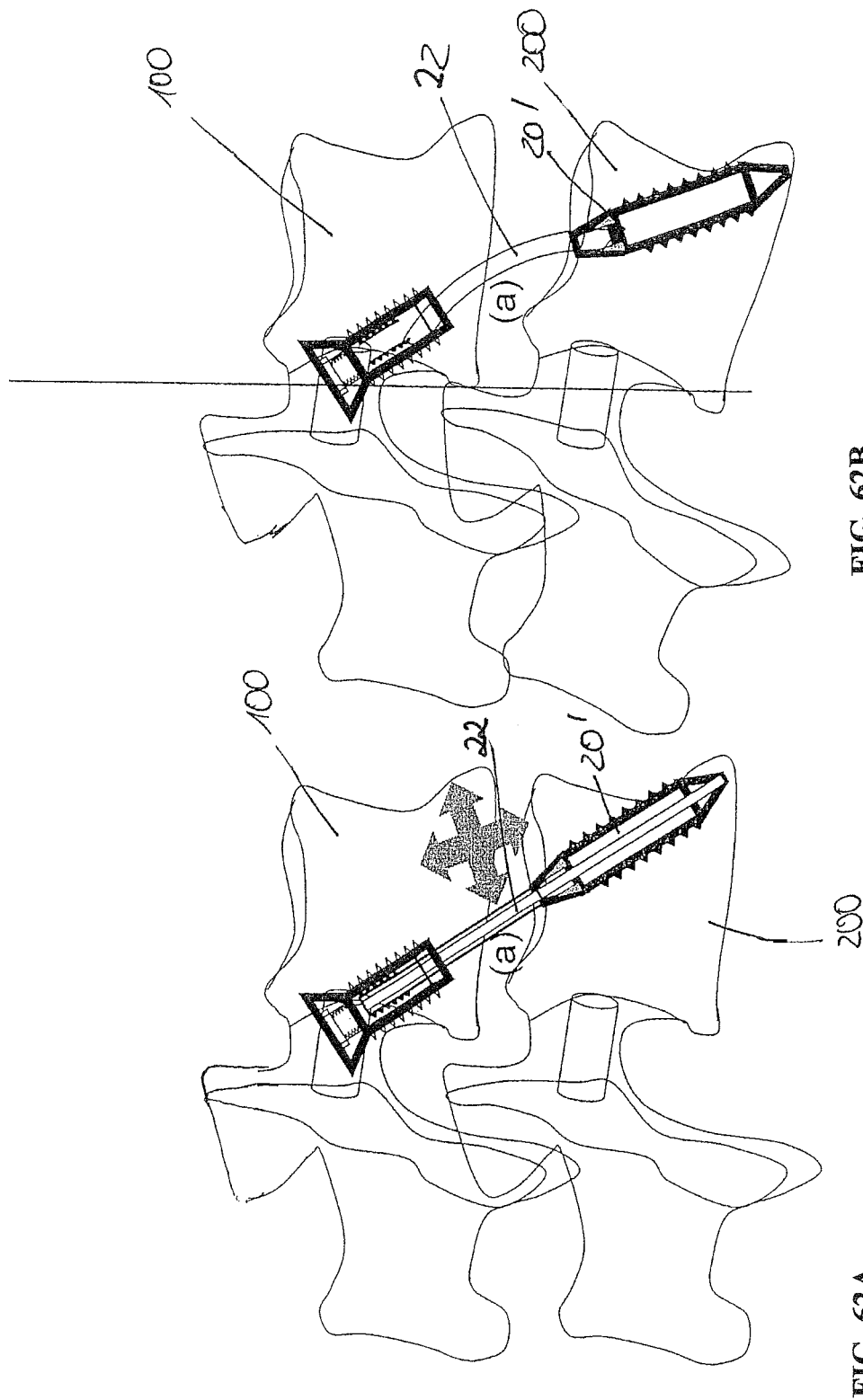


FIG. 62B

FIG. 62A

1

PROCESS FOR INTRODUCING A STABILIZING ELEMENT INTO A VERTEBRAL COLUMN

CROSS REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

None

FIGURE FOR PUBLICATION

FIG.19

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

1. Field of the Invention

The present invention relates to a process for introducing a stabilizing element into a vertebral column as well as the process for introducing an intervertebral disk prosthesis into an intervertebral space.

2. Description of the Related Art

It is known that a vertebral column can be stabilized in that adjacent vertebral bodies are connected to each other by a rod system. To this end, several, in particular four, pedicle screws are inserted transversely to the longitudinal axis of the vertebral column into the adjacent vertebral bodies and each two pedicle screws of adjacent vertebral bodies are connected to one another by a rod. Such a stabilization requires a considerable intervention in the patient and entails as a rule a soft-tissue trauma over a length of 10 cm or more.

It is furthermore known that an intervertebral disk prosthesis can be introduced between two adjacent vertebral bodies in order to replace a defective intervertebral disk. In order to insert such a intervertebral disk prosthesis, various operation procedures were developed. The best-known processes are the ventrally performed vertebral body fusion, called ALIF (anterior lumbar interbody fusion), the dorsally performed vertebral body fusion, called PLIF (posterior lumbar interbody fusion) and the transforaminal vertebral body fusion, performed via a dorsolateral access, called TLIF (transforaminal lumbar interbody fusion) (cf. FIG. 49). These interventions also require a considerable intervention in the patient.

The invention solves the problem by making available a process for the stabilizing of a vertebral column that brings about a reliable stabilization of the vertebral column with few components and that in particular causes only a slight trauma to the soft tissue.

The invention solves the problem with a process for the introduction of a stabilizing element into a vertebral column as well as with a process for introducing an intervertebral disk prosthesis into an intervertebral space between two adjacent vertebral bodies.

ASPECTS AND SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The process in accordance with the invention for introducing a stabilizing element into a vertebral column is distinguished in that the stabilizing element is introduced in such a manner that the stabilizing element connects two adjacent vertebral bodies to one another. The connection takes place, in particular, directly via the stabilizing element. Thus, there is the possibility of stabilizing a vertebral column, in particular two adjacent vertebral bodies with a single stabilizing element.

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According to a preferred embodiment of the invention, the stabilizing element passes through each of the two adjacent vertebral bodies in the longitudinal direction of the vertebral column at least in sections. As a result, a direct connection of the two adjacent vertebral bodies is directly achieved by the stabilizing element itself. Thus, a plurality of components to be introduced, such as is necessary in a rod system, is eliminated.

The stabilizing element is introduced in an especially advantageous manner through a single access point so that the intervention can take place in particular in a minimally invasive manner and severe trauma to the soft tissue can be avoided in the patient. The access point is preferably dorso-medially arranged.

A reliable stabilization of the two adjacent vertebral bodies relative to one another is preferably achieved in that the stabilizing element is introduced in such a manner that it passes through the one, in particular the superior one, of the two adjacent vertebral bodies and that one end of the stabilizing element comes to rest in the other, in particular the inferior one, of the two adjacent vertebral bodies.

The stabilizing element is preferably introduced in such a manner that it comes to lie on a connection line between a pedicle of the superior one of the two adjacent vertebral bodies and between a point in the inferior third of the anterior edge of a sagittal section of the inferior one of the two adjacent vertebral bodies, or that it comes to lie on a connection line between a pedicle of the inferior one of the two adjacent vertebral bodies and between a point in the superior third of the anterior edge of a sagittal section of the superior one of the two adjacent vertebral bodies. The stabilizing element connects the two vertebral bodies thereby in a reliable manner and can be introduced through a single access point.

The stabilizing element is preferably introduced in such a manner that it lies, when viewed from the dorsal in the sagittal direction, on a line that has an entrance point between 9 and 11 o'clock and an exit point between 4 and 6 o'clock on a pedicle clock of the superior vertebral body, or that has an entrance point between 1 and 3 o'clock and an exit point between 6 and 8 o'clock on a pedicle clock of the superior vertebral body, or that has an entrance point between 7 and 9 o'clock and an exit point between 12 and 2 o'clock on a pedicle clock of the inferior vertebral body, or that has an entrance point between 3 and 5 o'clock and an exit point between 10 and 12 o'clock on a pedicle clock of the inferior vertebral body. This position of the stabilizing element achieves a reliable stabilization of the two vertebral bodies relative to one another.

The stabilizing element is preferably introduced along a guide wire, which facilitates the positioning of the stabilizing element.

According to a preferred environment of the invention, the relative position of the two adjacent vertebral bodies can be varied relative to one another by the stabilizing element, which can bring about a desired stabilization of the vertebral column in a simple manner.

The stabilizing element is preferably constructed as a bone screw that can be introduced in an especially simple manner and finds a good hold in the vertebral bodies by the threading.

The bone screw is advantageously inserted into a casing that has a section with an outer threading. The casing brings about an additional stabilization of the bone screw in the vertebral body.

The bone screw is especially preferably inserted into a casing that has a front section, a middle section and a rear section, whereby the front section has an outer threading and at least one spreading element is arranged in the middle

section. After the insertion of the casing, the spreading elements can be spread open in order to stabilize, for example, straighten out one of the vertebral bodies through which the casing is guided.

According to a preferred embodiment of the invention, an intervertebral disk prosthesis is inserted between the two adjacent vertebral bodies through which prosthesis the stabilizing element passes. In this manner, an additional stabilization of the vertebral column can be achieved and in particular a stabilization of the intervertebral disk prosthesis and the bone screw relative to one another can be achieved.

The intervertebral disk prosthesis is especially preferably constructed substantially U-shaped with a first shank and a second shank, whereby the two shanks can be pivoted relative to one another. This makes possible a minimally invasive introduction of the intervertebral disk prosthesis. In particular, at first the intervertebral disk prosthesis and subsequently the bone screw can be inserted, or also at first the bone screw and subsequently the intervertebral disk prosthesis can be inserted.

The process in accordance with the invention for introducing an intervertebral disk prosthesis into an intervertebral space between two adjacent vertebral bodies is distinguished in that the intervertebral disk prosthesis is introduced through a single extraforaminal access point. Thus, the access point lies further dorsally, however, at such a large angle to the sagittal plane that the access is not guided through the foramen but rather an introduction of the intervertebral disk prosthesis into the intervertebral space is laterally possible (cf. FIG. 49). A damaging of the foramen and a significant trauma to the soft tissue of the patient are therefore avoided. This operation procedure is therefore designated as EFOLIF (extraforaminal interbody fusion).

Nerve roots present between the extraforaminal access point and the intervertebral space are pressed either inferior-medially or superior-laterally. If the nerve roots are pressed inferior-medially, or caudo-dorsally, the operation procedure is designated as EPAPINLIF (extraforaminal parapedicular inferior interbody fusion), whereas the operation procedure in which the nerve roots are pressed superior-laterally or ventro-cranially is designated as EPAPSULIF (extraforaminal parapedicular superior interbody fusion).

According to an advantageous further development of the intervertebral a first fixation screw is introduced through the extraforaminal access point transpedicularly or extrapedicularly. This eliminates further accesses for the introduction of fixation screws for fastening a rod system.

A second fixation screw is preferably introduced through the extraforaminal access point extrapedicularly. This eliminates further accesses for the introduction of fixation screws for fastening a rod system.

An advantageous environment of the invention provides that the first fixation screw is attached to the inferior one of the two adjacent vertebral bodies and that the second fixation screw is attached to the superior one of the two adjacent vertebral bodies, and that a rod is fastened to the first fixation screw and to the second fixation screw. This makes it possible to introduce the intervertebral disk prosthesis through a single access as well as the fastening of a rod system.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

The invention is explained in detail using the following figures:

FIG. 1a shows a front view of two adjacent vertebral bodies.

FIG. 1b shows a lateral view of the two vertebral bodies according to FIG. 1a.

FIG. 2a shows a lateral view of two adjacent vertebral bodies.

FIG. 2b shows a top view onto the two vertebral bodies in accordance with FIG. 2a.

FIG. 3 shows a perspective view of a first exemplary embodiment of a casing.

FIG. 3a shows a top view onto the rear end of the casing according to FIG. 3;

FIG. 4 shows the casing according to FIG. 3 with a screw to be introduced therein.

FIG. 5 shows the casing according to FIG. 3 with a screw set therein.

FIG. 6 shows the casing according to FIG. 3 with a screwing-in instrument set on it.

FIG. 7 shows a perspective view of a second exemplary embodiment of a casing.

FIG. 8 shows the casing according to FIG. 7 in the spread-open state.

FIG. 9 shows a lateral view of the casing according to FIG. 7.

FIG. 10 shows a sectional enlargement of the casing according to FIG. 7.

FIG. 11 shows a lateral view of a third exemplary embodiment of a casing.

FIG. 12 shows the casing according to FIG. 11 in partial section.

FIG. 13 shows a top view onto the rear end of the casing according to FIG. 11,

FIG. 14 shows the casing according to FIG. 11 in a partially screwed-in-state.

FIG. 15 shows the casing according to FIG. 11 in the screwed-in-state.

FIG. 16 shows another view of the casing according to FIG. 15.

FIG. 17 shows a longitudinal section through the casing according to FIG. 11.

FIG. 18 shows a schematic view of the casing according to FIG. 3 in a state inserted in a vertebral body.

FIG. 19 shows a schematic view of the casing according to FIG. 11 in a state inserted in a vertebral body.

FIG. 20 shows the casing according to FIG. 19 in a state screwed further into a vertebral body.

FIG. 21 shows a front view of the casing according to FIG. 20 in a state inserted in a vertebral body.

FIG. 22 shows a schematic view of a first exemplary embodiment of an intervertebral disk prosthesis.

FIG. 23 shows a schematic view of a second exemplary embodiment of an intervertebral disk prosthesis.

FIG. 24 shows a schematic view of a third exemplary embodiment of an intervertebral disk prosthesis.

FIG. 25 shows a schematic view of a fourth exemplary embodiment of an intervertebral disk prosthesis.

FIG. 26 shows a schematic view of a fifth exemplary embodiment of an intervertebral disk prosthesis.

FIG. 27 shows a side view of the intervertebral disk prosthesis according to FIG. 26.

FIG. 28 shows the intervertebral disk prosthesis according to FIG. 26 in a pivoted-open state.

FIG. 29 shows a schematic perspective view of a sixth exemplary embodiment of an intervertebral disk prosthesis.

FIG. 30 shows a top view onto the intervertebral disk prosthesis according to FIG. 29 in the folded-together state.

FIG. 31 shows the intervertebral disk prosthesis according to FIG. 29 in a pivoted-open state.

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FIG. 32 shows a perspective view of the spring element of the intervertebral disk prosthesis according to FIG. 30.

FIG. 33 shows a perspective view of the intervertebral disk prosthesis according to FIG. 29 in a spread-open state.

FIG. 34 shows a top view onto the disassembled intervertebral disk prosthesis according to FIG. 29.

FIG. 35 shows the intervertebral disk prosthesis according to FIG. 29 in a folded-together state that is inserted into a holder.

FIG. 36 shows the intervertebral disk prosthesis according to FIG. 29 in a spread-open state that is inserted into a holder.

FIG. 37 shows the intervertebral disk prosthesis according to FIG. 29 with the holder separated from it.

FIG. 38 shows a view of the introduction of the intervertebral disk prosthesis according to FIG. 29 into an intervertebral space.

FIG. 39 shows another view of the insertion of the intervertebral disk prosthesis according to FIG. 29 into an intervertebral space.

FIG. 40 shows another view of the insertion of the intervertebral disk prosthesis according to FIG. 29 into an intervertebral space.

FIG. 41 shows another view of the insertion of the intervertebral disk prosthesis according to FIG. 29 into an intervertebral space.

FIG. 42 shows another view of the insertion of the intervertebral disk prosthesis according to FIG. 29 into an intervertebral space.

FIG. 43 shows the intervertebral disk prosthesis according to FIG. 29 in the state inserted into the intervertebral space with a schematic perspective view of a bone screw.

FIG. 44 shows a side view of the intervertebral disk prosthesis in the state inserted into the intervertebral space between two adjacent vertebrae with a schematic view of the bone screw.

FIG. 45 shows a seventh exemplary embodiment of an intervertebral disk prosthesis with holder.

FIG. 46 shows the intervertebral disk prosthesis according to FIG. 45 with holder.

FIG. 47 shows the intervertebral disk prosthesis according to FIG. 45 with an alternative spring element.

FIG. 48 shows the intervertebral disk prosthesis according to FIG. 47 in another position.

FIG. 49 shows a schematic view of different access paths.

FIG. 50 shows a schematic view of the extraforaminal access path.

FIG. 51 shows another schematic view of the extraforaminal access path.

FIG. 52 shows a schematic view of the vertebral body with attached first fixation screw.

FIG. 53 shows a schematic view of the vertebral body with an attached second fixation screw.

FIG. 54a shows a schematic view of the vertebral body with attached rod.

FIG. 54b shows a schematic view of the vertebral body with attached rod with the first fixation screw in an alternative position.

FIG. 55 shows a side view of a fourth exemplary embodiment of a casing with a screw inserted in it.

FIG. 56 shows the casing according to FIG. 55 with an only partially inserted screw.

FIG. 57 shows the casing according to FIG. 55 with the screw according to FIG. 55.

FIG. 58 shows a schematic view of the screw according to FIG. 57 in a state inserted into a vertebral body.

FIG. 59 shows the screw according to FIG. 57, onto which the casing according to FIG. 57 is screwed on.

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FIG. 60 shows the screw according to FIG. 57 onto which the casing according to FIG. 57 is screwed on with another position of the casing.

FIG. 61 shows the screw according to FIG. 57 onto which the casing according to FIG. 22 is screwed on with another position of the casing.

FIG. 62 shows the screw according to FIG. 57 onto which the casing according to FIG. 57 is screwed on with another position of the casing.

In the figures, the same reference numerals designate parts that are identical or identical in nature. For the sake of clarity, not all reference numerals are indicated in all figures.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

FIGS. 1a, 1b and 2a, 2b show two adjacent vertebral bodies 100, 200, whereby vertebral body 100 forms the superior vertebral body and vertebral body 200 forms the inferior vertebral body. An intervertebral space 250 is arranged between the two vertebral bodies 100, 200. In order to be able to reestablish the stability of the vertebral column, for example, in the case of a defective intervertebral disk, in many operation procedures the two adjacent vertebral bodies 100, 200 and are rigidly connected to one another. According to the process in accordance with the invention, the connection of the two adjacent vertebral bodies 100, 200 takes place by means of a stabilizing element that directly connects the two adjacent vertebral bodies 100, 200 to one another. The connection takes place in particular in such a manner that the stabilizing element passes through each of the two adjacent vertebral bodies 100, 200 in the longitudinal direction of the vertebral column at least in sections so that in particular rod systems with several components arranged on the back side of vertebral bodies 100, 200 are avoided.

The stabilizing element is introduced in a first alternative along connection line 700 shown in FIGS. 1a and 1b. In this alternative, the introduction takes place from the cranial to the caudal. The introduction is possible through a single access point arranged in particular dorso-medially. As can be recognized, in particular in FIG. 1b, connection line 700 runs between a pedicle of superior vertebral body 100 and a point in the inferior, alternatively also in the superior, third of the anterior edge of a sagittal section of the inferior vertebral body 200. The sagittal section does not have to run symmetrically through the vertebral bodies 100, 200 but rather can also run parallel to them in an offset manner. As can be recognized in FIG. 1, connection line 700 has an entrance point between 9 and 11 o'clock and an exit point between 4 and 6 o'clock viewed dorsally in the sagittal direction on a pedicle clock 800 of superior vertebral body 100. Of course, the stabilizing element can also be introduced mirror-symmetrically to the sagittal plane and thus connection line 700 has an entrance point between 1 and 3 o'clock and an exit point between 6 and 8 o'clock on a pedicle clock of superior vertebral body 100. A clock arranged in an imaginary manner on a pedicle is considered as pedicle clock 800, which can be recognized in a front view and whose connection line runs between its 12 and its 6 approximately parallel to the longitudinal axis of the vertebral column.

If a stabilizing element is introduced along connection line 700, it passes at first through superior vertebral body 100 until a distal end of the stabilizing element comes to lie in inferior vertebral body 200, so that the two vertebral bodies 100, 200 can be directly connected to one another by the stabilizing element in this manner.

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In order to be able to insert the stabilizing element, at first the point on superior vertebral body **100** is determined on which the imaginary pedicle clock **800** is arranged, and the alignment of connection line **700** is determined. A bearing is taken on the pedicle on which connection line **700** enters into superior vertebral body **100** in particular in the anterior-posterior beam path and on the vertebral spine of inferior vertebral body **200**. At first, a guide wire is introduced along connection line **700**. Finally, the stabilizing element is introduced along the guide wire.

The stabilizing element is introduced in a second alternative along connection line **700'** shown in FIGS. **2a** and **2b**. In this alternative the introduction takes place from caudal to cranial. The introduction is possible through a single access point that is arranged in particular dorso-medially. As can be recognized in particular in FIG. **2a**, connection line **700'** runs between a pedicle of inferior vertebral body **200** and a point in the inferior, alternatively also in the superior, third of the anterior edge of a sagittal section of superior vertebral body **200**. The sagittal section does not have to run symmetrically through vertebral bodies **100**, **200** but rather can also run parallel to them in an offset manner. Connection line **700'** has an entrance point between 7 and 9 o'clock and an exit point between 12 and 2 o'clock when viewed from the dorsal in the sagittal direction on a pedicle clock of inferior vertebral body **200**. Of course, the stabilizing element can also be introduced mirror-symmetrically to the sagittal plane and thus connection line **700** has an entrance point between 3 and 5 o'clock and an exit point between 10 and 12 o'clock on a pedicle clock of the inferior vertebral body.

If a stabilizing element is introduced along connection line **700'**, it passes at first through inferior vertebral body **200** until a distal end of the stabilizing element comes to lie in superior vertebral body **100**, so that in this manner the two vertebral bodies **100**, **200** are directly connected to one another by the stabilizing element.

In order to be able to insert the stabilizing element, at first the point on the inferior vertebral body **200** is determined at which imaginary pedicle clock **800** is arranged and the alignment of connection line **700'** determined. A bearing is taken on the pedicle at which connection line **700'** enters into inferior vertebral body **200**, in particular in the anterior-posterior beam path, and on the vertebral spine of superior vertebral body **100**. At first, a guide wire is introduced along connection line **700'**. Finally, the stabilizing element is introduced along the guide wire.

Alternatively, or additionally, to the stabilizing element that is used, in particular in accordance with one of the two previously described processes, an intervertebral disk prosthesis can be used. This takes place via an operation procedure in accordance with the invention in which the intervertebral disk is introduced through a single extraforaminal access point. The access point is therefore located further dorsally, but at such a large angle to the sagittal plane that the access is not guided through the foramen but rather an introduction of the intervertebral disk prosthesis into intervertebral space **250** is laterally possible (cf. FIGS. **49** and **51**). The intervertebral disk prosthesis can be laterally introduced from the right as well as from the left. This avoids damage to the foramen and severe trauma to the soft tissue of the patient. This operation process is therefore designated as EFOLIF (extraforaminal interbody fusion). Nerve roots present between the extraforaminal access point and intervertebral space **250** are pressed either inferior-medially or superior-laterally. This is shown in particular in FIG. **50**. A surgical instrument **260a** is used to press a nerve root **270** arranged between the access point and intervertebral space **250** superior-laterally or, expressed another terms, ventro-cranially.

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This operation procedure is designated as epapsulif (extraforaminal parapedicular superior interbody fusion). A surgical instrument **260b** is used to press a nerve root **270** arranged between the access point and intervertebral space **250** alternatively inferior-medially or, expressed another terms, caudo-dorsally. This operation procedure is designated as EPAPINLIF (extraforaminal parapedicular inferior interbody fusion). The intervertebral disk prosthesis can be introduced laterally into intervertebral space **250** in the EPAPINLIF process as well as in the EPAPSULIF process (cf. FIG. **51**) without damaging the forearm and as in traditional transforaminal processes.

In addition, the extraforaminal access point through which the intervertebral disk prosthesis is introduced also makes possible an introduction of a rod system if the intervertebral disk prosthesis is not to be used in combination with the previously described stabilizing element that directly connects the two adjacent vertebral bodies **100**, **200** to one another. In order to fasten the rod system, a first fixation screw **280** is introduced transspedicularly, i.e., through a pedicle of the vertebral body, in particular of superior vertebral body **100**, through the extraforaminal access point (FIG. **52**). Furthermore, a second fixation screw **285** is introduced extrapedicularly, i.e., not through the pedicle, but rather transversely to the pedicle through the extraforaminal access point, in particular into inferior vertebral body **200** (cf. FIG. **53**). Fixation screws **280**, **285** are designed in such a manner that a rod can be attached to their heads so that after the introduction of fixation screws **280**, **285** a rod **286** is fastened to the first fixation screw **280** and to the second fixation screw **285** for a rigid connection of the two adjacent vertebral bodies **100**, **200** (cf. FIG. **54a**). Alternatively, as shown in FIG. **54b**, the first fixation screw **280** can also be fastened extrapedicularly in superior vertebral body **100** (cf. FIG. **54b**).

Embodiments of the stabilizing element are described in the following.

FIGS. **3** to **6** show different views of a first exemplary embodiment of a casing **10** with a front section **11**, a central area **12** following it and with a following rear area **13**. Front area **11** carries an outer threading **14**. Rear area **13** is designed smooth on its outer side or optionally structured in the longitudinal direction. Several slots **15** are arranged in the central area in the longitudinal direction of casing **10** between which spreading elements **16** are formed. In the present instance, slots **15** are arranged regularly distributed over the circumference. A total of four spreading elements **16** are formed; however, the number of spreading elements **16** can also be higher or lower. In particular, spreading elements **16** can also be arranged and formed asymmetrically over the outer circumference of casing **10**.

A first inner threading is arranged in front area **11** of casing **10** which spreading has a first pitch. A screw **20** can be screwed into casing **10**, in particular into the first inner threading of casing **10**, which screw has a shaft **20a** and a head **20b**. Shaft **20a** has a front section **21**, a following central area **22** and rear section **23** following the latter, whereby head **20b** follows rear section **23**. A first outer threading **24** is arranged in front section **21** of screw **20** whereas a second outer threading **25** is arranged in rear section **23**. The first outer threading **24** has a third pitch whereas the second outer threading **25** has a fourth pitch. However, the third pitch of first outer threading **24** corresponds in particular to the first pitch of the first inner threading of casing **10**. The third pitch and the fourth pitch are selected differently so that screw **20** acts as a traction screw or compression screw. When screw **20** is screwed into casing **10**, as is apparent in particular in FIG. **5**, the first section **11** is

drawn against rear section 13 by the different pitches of the first and second outer threadings 24, 25, whereby spreading elements 16 arranged in the central range spread radially outward. Spreading elements 16 have set kinks 17 that are intended to ensure a defined spreading open of spreading elements 16.

Casing 10 can also have only front section 11 with outer threading 14 without the following central and rear areas 12, 13 (not shown) in order to bring about a stabilization of screw 20 in the vertebral body.

A screwdriver instrument 40 is used to insert casing 10 into vertebral bodies 100, 200 (cf. FIG. 18). Casing 10 has an out-of-round contour 18 on its one end, especially on the free end of rear section 13 (cf. FIG. 3a), in which contour a correspondingly formed contour of screwdriver instrument 40 engages in order to screw the casing into vertebral bodies 100, 200. As is apparent from FIG. 18, in which two adjacent vertebral bodies 100, 200 are schematically shown with an intervertebral space 250 between them, casing 10 is screwed in through upper vertebral body 100 until into lower vertebral body 200, whereby casing 10 passes through intervertebral space 250. Central area 12 with spreading elements 16 comes to rest inside lower vertebral body 200. If screw 20 is subsequently screwed in, spreading elements 16 spread open inside vertebral body 52 in order, for example, to straighten it out and stabilize it.

A stop 26 is arranged on screw shaft 20a, in particular between central area 22 and rear area 23 of screw 20, against which stop the free end of rear area 13 of casing 10 strikes during the screwing in of screw 20 so that front area 11 of casing 10 can be drawn against rear area 13 of casing 10 and spreading elements 16 spread open in central area 12.

Screw 20 is cannulized so that during the implantation a guide wire 30 can be introduced at first via which casing 10 and finally screw 20 can subsequently be introduced.

FIGS. 7 to 10 show another exemplary embodiment of a casing 10' that can be inserted without a screw. Casing 10' is manufactured from a memory metal, in particular nitinol, which changes its form in particular upon reaching the body temperature. Casing 10' has slots 15 also running in the longitudinal direction between which spreading elements 16 are formed. After casing 10' has been inserted into vertebral bodies 100, 200 and the body temperature reached, front section 11 and rear section 13 move relatively toward one another so that spreading elements 16 are spread open in central area 12 (cf. FIG. 8). Casing 10' is stabilized thereby in vertebral body 200 via outer threading 14 of front area 11.

A third exemplary embodiment of a casing 10'' is shown in FIGS. 11 to 16. Casing 10'' has slots 15'' that extend in the longitudinal direction but run at an incline to the longitudinal direction. If front area 11 and rear area 13 are moved toward one another and in particular are rotated relative to one another at this time, spreading elements 16 formed between slots 15'' spread open, whereby they remain almost resting on one another in particular during the rotation of front section 11 against rear section 13 and form a circumferential bead (cf. FIG. 15).

FIGS. 19 to 21 show how casing 10' comes to rest in the adjacent vertebral bodies 100, 200. Casing 10' is introduced through upper vertebral body 100, passes through intervertebral space 250 and is introduced so far that front area 11 and central area 12 come to rest in lower vertebral body 200. Spreading elements 16 stabilize lower vertebral body 200 after the spreading open of casing 10'.

The stabilizing element can therefore be formed from a casing such as, for example, casing 10 or 10' in combination with a bone screw, for example, bone screw 20, or solely from

one casing such as, for example, casing 10'', or also solely from one bone screw such as, for example, bone screw 20.

If the stabilizing element is formed exclusively by a bone screw, the bone screw can have a pitch over its entire length. In a preferred embodiment of the invention, bone screw 20 has a shaft 20a and a head 20b, which shaft 20a has a front section 21, a following central area 22 and following rear section 23, which rear section 23 is followed by head 20b (cf. FIG. 4). A first outer threading 24 is arranged in front section 21 of screw 20 whereas a second outer threading 25 is arranged in rear section 23. First outer threading 24 has a third pitch, whereas second outer threading 25 has a fourth pitch. The third pitch and the fourth pitch are selected differently so that screw 20 acts as a traction screw or compression screw by means of which the relative position of the two adjacent vertebral bodies 100, 200 can be varied relative to one another.

FIGS. 55 to 57 show another exemplary embodiment of a casing 10' with another exemplary embodiment of a screw 20'. FIGS. 58 to 62 show how casing 10' and screw 20' are introduced into two adjacent vertebral bodies 100, 200.

FIGS. 55 to 57 show different views of a first exemplary embodiment of a casing 10''' with the front section 11 and a following rear area 13. Front area 11 carries an outer threading 14. An inner threading 16 for the first pitch is arranged in rear section 13. Rear section 13 can be conically designed for better stabilization.

Screw 20' has a front section 21 and a following central area 22 followed by rear section 23. A first outer threading 24 is arranged in front section 21 of screw 20 whereas a second outer threading 25 is arranged in rear section 23. The first outer threading 24 has a third pitch, whereas second outer threading 25 has a fourth pitch. However, the fourth pitch of the second outer threading 25 corresponds in particular to the first pitch of the first inner threading 16 of casing 10. The third pitch and the fourth pitch can be differently selected.

As can be recognized in FIGS. 58 to 62, at first screw 20' is introduced, in particular along a guide wire 30, into vertebral body 100, 200, whereby screw 20' is screwed through upper vertebral body 100 until into lower vertebral body 200, whereby screw 20' passes through intervertebral space 53. The central area 22 comes to lie in intervertebral space 53 (cf. FIGS. 58 and 59). Subsequently, casing 10' is rotated onto screw 20' (cf. FIGS. 59 to 62), during which second outer threading 25 of screw 20' engages into inner threading 16 of casing 10'''. Casing 10''' can, in particular, be screwed in so far that a stop 26 of screw 20' is drawn against the distal edge of casing 10''' and vertebral bodies 100, 200 are subsequently distracted (cf. FIGS. 59, 60 and 61). Alternatively, casing 10''' can also be screwed on only so far that it remains in superior vertebral body 100 and only the central section 22 of screw 20' passes through intervertebral space 53 (cf. FIG. 62).

In one embodiment central section 22 of screw 20' is elastically constructed. If casing 10''' is screwed on only so far that it remains in superior vertebral body 100, and only the central section 22 of screw 20' passes through intervertebral space 53, there is the possibility of tilting vertebral bodies 100, 200 toward one another and moving them relative to one another so that an intervertebral disk can be simulated in this manner (cf. FIG. 62).

A good stabilization of the two vertebral bodies 100, 200 relative to one another can be achieved in particular given the formation of bone screw 20 as compression screw, especially if an intervertebral disk prosthesis is additionally introduced into intervertebral space 250.

Embodiments of an intervertebral disk prosthesis are described in the following.

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FIG. 22 shows a top view onto first exemplary embodiment of an intervertebral disk prosthesis 1000 with a first shank 1100 that has a first end 1100a and a second end 1100b and has a second shank 1200 that has a first end 1200a and a second end 1200b. The two shanks 1100, 1200 are connected to each other in one piece on their second ends 1100b, 1200b. The free ends 1100a, 1200a are bent toward one another so that an almost closed ring with a slot results. Intervertebral disk prosthesis 1000 is manufactured from an elastic material, which makes it possible that the two shanks 1100, 1200 can be pivoted toward one another. The pivoting of the two shanks 1100, 1200 toward one another takes place in the plane in which the U-shaped element lies. In the present instance this is in particular the paper plane.

FIG. 23 shows a top view onto a second exemplary embodiment of an intervertebral disk prosthesis 2000 with a first shank 2100 that has a first end 2100a and a second end 2100b and with a second shank 2200 that has a first end 2200a and a second end 2200b. The first ends 2100a, 2200a are designed as free ends whereas the two shanks 2100, 2200 are connected to each other on their second ends 2100b, 2200b. This connection takes place by a bolt 2500. In the exemplary embodiment according to FIG. 23, the two shanks 2100, 2200 are directly supported against one another in a rotatable manner by a single bolt 2500. Alternatively, it is also possible to arrange each of the two shanks 2100, 2200 pivotably on a connection element by a separate bolt. Bolt 2500 runs substantially vertically to the plane of substantially U-shaped intervertebral disk prosthesis 2000, in particular vertically to the paper plane in the drawing. As a result, the two shanks 2100, 2200 are pivotably supported against one another in the plane of U-shaped intervertebral disk prosthesis 2000, i.e., in the paper plane. A pivoting open of the two shanks 2100, 2200 toward one another can take place, for example, in that a spreading-open element 2600 of a holder 2700 is thrust between the two shanks 2100, 2200 and that the two shanks 2100, 2200 are formed with such a compulsory curve on their second ends 2100b, 2200b that they escape from spreading-open element 2600 and are pivoted relatively toward one another.

FIG. 24 shows a top view onto a third exemplary embodiment of an intervertebral disk prosthesis 3000 with a first shank 3100 that has a first end 3100a and a second end 3100b and with a second shank 3200 that has a first end 3200a and a second end 3200b. The two shanks 3100, 3200 are arranged pivotably supported against one another via a bolt 3500 similar to the second exemplary embodiment of the intervertebral disk prosthesis 2000, whereby bolt 3500 runs substantially vertically to the plane of the substantially U-shaped intervertebral disk prosthesis 3000, i.e., substantially vertically to the paper plane in the present representation. A pivoting open of the two shanks 3100, 3200, relative to one another, takes place in the third exemplary embodiment by means of a lever element 3600 arranged on intervertebral disk prosthesis 3000. Lever element 3600 is also supported in such a manner that it can pivot about bolt 3500 and is constructed, for example, as an eccentric element. During the pivoting of lever element 3600 in pivoting direction X, lever element 3600 attacks, for example, a compulsory curve 3700 arranged on second end 3100b of first shank 3100 in order to pivot the two shanks 3100, 3200 apart for one another in pivoting direction Y. A corresponding compulsory curve can also be arranged on free end 3200b of second shank 3200 which curve brings about a pivoting apart of the two shanks 3100, 3200 during the pivoting of lever element 3600 about bolt 3500.

FIG. 25 shows a top view onto a fourth exemplary embodiment of an intervertebral disk prosthesis 4000 with a first

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shank 4100 that has a first end 4100a and a second end 4100b and with a second shank 4200 that has a first end 4200a and a second end 4200b, whereby the two shanks 4100, 4200 are connected to one another by a cylindrical articulation 4500. An actuation element 4600 can be inserted into cylindrical articulation 4500 in order to pivot the two shanks 4100, 4200 toward one another.

FIGS. 26 to 28 show a fifth exemplary embodiment of an intervertebral disk prosthesis 5000. Intervertebral disk prosthesis 5000 has a first shank 5100 and a second shank 5200, which first shank 5100 has a first end 5100a and a second end 5100b whereas the second shank 5200 has a first end 5200a and a second end 5200b. The two shanks 5100, 5200 are connected to one another on their second ends 5100b, 5200b by a connecting element 5300. The first shank 5100 is pivotably supported by a bolt 5300a on connecting element 5300 whereas second shank 5200 is pivotably supported by a bolt 5200b on connecting element 5300. Furthermore, the two ends 5100b, 5200b of shanks 5100, 5200 are equipped with a geared section 5100c, 5200c, which geared sections 5100c, 5200c are arranged in particular concentrically around the particular bolts 5300a, 5300b. During the introduction of intervertebral disk prosthesis 5000 into an intervertebral space, the two shanks 5100, 5200 lie substantially parallel (compare FIG. 26). After the introduction of intervertebral disk prosthesis 5000 into the intervertebral space, a spreading-open element 5600 is introduced between the two second ends 5100b, 5200b of shanks 5100, 5200. Spreading-open element 5600 has a geared section 5700 corresponding to geared sections 5100c, 5200c of shanks 5100, 5200 by means of which geared section 5700 the two shanks 5100, 5200 are spread further apart the further spreading-open element 5600 is introduced between the two shanks 5100, 5200.

In order to be able to visually follow the introduction and positioning of intervertebral disk prosthesis 5000 in the intervertebral space, in particular the first ends 5100a, 5200a are provided with an x-ray contrast material, for example, coated with tantalum. Another x-ray contrast marker is preferably arranged in the third place. Preferably, at least three x-ray contrast markers are arranged on intervertebral disk prosthesis 5000 that also do not necessarily have to be arranged on the free ends 5100a, 5200a of shanks 5100, 5200. Of course, the x-ray contrast markers can also be used with all other intervertebral disk prostheses described in the present Application.

Shanks 5100, 5200 each have a recess 5100d, 5200d on the lateral surfaces facing each other. In particular a bone screw that stabilizes two adjacent vertebral bodies against one another can be run through this area.

As can be recognized in the lateral view according to FIG. 27 the upper and lower sides of shanks 5100, 5200 can be designed curved in order to adapt to the anatomic conditions. In particular, the upper and/or lower side(s) of intervertebral disk prosthesis 5000 can have teeth 5500 in order to improve an anchoring of intervertebral disk prosthesis 5000 in the adjacent vertebral body.

The first shank 5100 has in the present instance a larger side than shank 5200 (compare FIGS. 26 and 28) in order to achieve a uniform stabilization of the two adjacent vertebral bodies against one another for the case that the bone screw connecting the two adjacent vertebrae to one another is not centrally guided through the intervertebral space.

FIGS. 28 to 34 show different views of a sixth exemplary embodiment of an intervertebral disk prosthesis 6000 whereas FIGS. 35 to 44 show in what manner intervertebral disk prosthesis 6000 can be introduced into the intervertebral space.

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Intervertebral disk prosthesis **600** has a first shank **6100** and a second shank **6200** which first shank **6100** has a first end **6100a** and a second end **6100b**, whereas the second shank **6200** has a first end **6200a** and a second end **6200b**. The two shanks **6100**, **6200** have a second recess **6100d**, **6200d** on the side surface facing the other one between the first end **6100a**, **6200a** and between the second end **6100b**, **6200b**. The two shanks **6100**, **6200** are connected to one another by a spring element **6500** (cf. FIG. 32) that engages, as described in the following, into the second recess **6100d**, **6200d** of shanks **6100**, **6200**. Spring element **6500** has a substantially cylindrical section **6500a** that is slotted over its entire length and on which, starting from the slot, two anchoring wings **6500b**, **6500c** are arranged. Anchoring wings **6500b**, **6500c** can therefore pivot substantially about the longitudinal axis of cylindrical section **6500a** of spring element **6500**. One anchoring ring **6500b**, **6500c** at a time engages into one of the two recesses **6100d**, **6200d** of shanks **6100**, **6200** (compare in particular FIGS. 30 and 31). Here, FIG. 31 shows the state of spring element **6500** without outside action of force. Thus, spring element **6500** is relaxed when the two shanks **6100**, **6200** are spread open relative to one another. On the other hand, FIG. 30 shows spring element **6500** in the loaded state. The two shanks **6100**, **6200** are moved into a closed position counter to the force of spring element **6500** in which position they run in particular substantially parallel to one another.

A first recess **6100c**, **6200c** is arranged between the second recess **6100d**, **6200d** and the first ends **6100a**, **6200a** of shanks **6100**, **6200** on the side surfaces of shanks **6100**, **6200** facing one another, through which recesses in particular a bone screw connecting the two adjacent vertebral bodies can be run as a stabilizing element, for example, bone screw **20** previously described using FIG. 4.

A third recess **6100e**, **6200e** is arranged between second recess **6100d**, **6200d** and the second ends **6100b**, **6200b** of shanks **6100**, **6200** on the side surfaces of shanks **6100**, **6200** facing one another into which third recess an insertion instrument **6600** can engage as described in the following using FIGS. 14 and 15.

Several x-ray contrast markers are arranged on shanks **6100**, **6200**, in particular in the area of first ends **6100a**, **6200a** of shanks **6100**, **6200** and in the area between second recess **6100d**, **6200d** and first recess **6100c**, **6200c** in order to be able to follow visually the insertion of intervertebral disk prosthesis **6000**.

FIGS. 35 to 37 show insertion instrument **6600** in detail, which has a casing **6700** in which two holding elements **6800** and a spreading-open element **6900** are arranged in an axially shiftable manner. Holding elements **6800** have gripping elements **6800a** on their distal end that are constructed in the present instance as spheres or cylinders that engage into fourth recesses **6100f**, **6200f** substantially positively and are arranged on the outer side surfaces of shanks **6100**, **6200** which side surfaces face away from the particular other shank **6100**, **6200**. Gripping elements **6800a** can lock in recesses **6100f**, **6200f** or be held in them in a clamping manner or only rest in them in a substantially positive manner. Spreading-open element **6900** has an element **6900a** on its distal end which element can also be constructed as a spherical or cylindrical element and which engages into third recess **6100e**, **6200e** of intervertebral disk prosthesis **6000**.

As FIG. 35 shows, spring element **6500** is widened against the spring force by the insertion of element **6900a** of spreading-open element **6900** into the third recesses **6100e**, **6200e** and the two shanks **6100**, **6200** are moved into a closed position. At the same time, gripping elements **6800a** of holding elements **6800** engage into fourth recesses **6100f**, **6200f** of

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shanks **6100**, **6200** in order to hold intervertebral disk prosthesis **6000**. In this position, intervertebral disk prosthesis **6000** can be introduced between two adjacent vertebral bodies **100**, **200**, as shown in FIGS. 38 and 39. In order to spread the intervertebral disk prosthesis open, spreading-open element **6900** is withdrawn axially in casing **6700** of insertion instrument **6600** so that shanks **6100**, **6200** are spread open relative to one another by the force of spring element **6500** (compare FIG. 36 and FIG. 40). Intervertebral disk prosthesis **6000** can subsequently be shifted into the intervertebral space to the desired position by holding elements **6800** (compare FIG. 40). Subsequently, even holding elements **6800** can be separated from intervertebral disk prosthesis **6000** by axially withdrawing holding elements **6800** in casing **6700** of insertion instrument **6600** (compare FIGS. 37 and 41) and subsequently insertion instrument **6600** can be completely removed from the operation area (compare FIG. 42). FIG. 43 illustrates in which manner a bone screw **20** transversely passes through the intervertebral space and intervertebral disk prosthesis **6000** in particular in the area of first recesses **6100c**, **6200c** of shanks **6100**, **6200**, whereas in FIGS. 38 to 43 bone screw **20** is shown only in section. A lateral view of the incorporated situation of intervertebral disk prosthesis **6000** into the intervertebral space between the two adjacent vertebral bodies **100**, **200** is shown in FIG. 44. In particular, the connection line **70**, along which bone screw **20** connects the two vertebral bodies **100**, **200**, is shown.

FIGS. 45 to 48 show a seventh exemplary embodiment of an intervertebral disk prosthesis **7000** that has a first shank **7100** with a first end **7100a** and a second end **7100b** as well as has a second shank **7200** with a first end **7200a** and a second end **7200b**. The two shanks **7100**, **7200** can be connected to one another to one piece or can be constructed as a separate shank. Instead of spring element **6500**, according to the sixth exemplary embodiment a spring element **7500** consisting of a memory alloy is arranged between the two shanks **7100**, **7200**. The memory alloy is designed in particular in such a manner that the form is changed upon reaching the body temperature. FIG. 45 shows an intervertebral disk prosthesis **7000** with the two shanks **7100**, **7200** in the closed position, in which intervertebral disk prosthesis **7000** can be introduced into the intervertebral space. This takes place in particular at a temperature that is slightly below the body temperature, in particular at room temperature, so that spring element **7500** rests on the two shanks **7100**, **7200** and, if necessary, additionally supports the holding of shanks **7100**, **7200** in the closed position. FIG. 46 shows the widening open of spring element **7500** upon reaching the body temperature based on the memory effect, whereby spring element **7500** spreads open in such a manner that shanks **7100**, **7200** are pivoted against one another.

Intervertebral disk **7000** can subsequently be moved into the desired position in the intervertebral space with an insertion instrument **7600** comparable to insertion instrument **6600** in accordance with the sixth exemplary embodiment in order to subsequently remove insertion instrument **7600**, whereby intervertebral disk prosthesis **7000** remains in the spread-open position by spring element **7500**. Spring element **7500** in accordance with FIGS. 45 and 46 has two elements in the manner of leaf-spring shanks. Alternatively, as shown in FIGS. 47 and 48, spring element **7500** can also be constructed as a slotted casing with two curved shanks.

The features from the different exemplary embodiments can also be combined in any desired manner.

Shanks **1100**, **1200**, **2100**, **2200**, **3100**, **3200**, **4100**, **4200**, **5100**, **5200**, **6100**, **6200**, **7100**, **7200** of intervertebral disk prostheses **1000**, **2000**, **3000**, **4000**, **5000**, **6000**, **7000** can all

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be manufactured from an elastic material. However, shanks **1100, 1200, 2100, 2200, 3100, 3200, 4100, 4200, 5100, 5200, 6100, 6200, 7100, 7200**, are preferably manufactured from PEEK (polyetheretherketone).

The invention claimed is:

1. A process, for introducing a stabilizing element into a vertebral column having a plurality of adjacent vertebral bodies, comprising the steps of:

providing a stabilizing element;

introducing said stabilizing element into said vertebral column through a single access point, said single access point being arranged dorso-laterally, said step of introducing including the step of: passing said stabilizing element through one of two of said adjacent vertebral bodies such that one end of said stabilizing element comes to lie in the other of said two adjacent vertebral bodies;

connecting said two of said adjacent vertebral bodies to each other along a longitudinal direction of said vertebral column;

providing an intervertebral disk prosthesis;

defining a single extraforaminal access point proximate said two adjacent vertebral bodies;

introducing said intervertebral disk prosthesis through said single extraforaminal access point; and

inserting said intervertebral disk prosthesis between said two adjacent vertebral bodies;

wherein said stabilizing element passes through said intervertebral disk prosthesis.

2. A process, according to claim 1, further comprising the steps of:

providing said stabilizing element as a bone screw;

providing a casing having a section with an outer threading;

inserting said bone screw into said casing prior to said step of introducing.

3. A process, according to claim 2, wherein: said casing has a middle section spacing a front section and a rear section; and wherein said front section further comprises: a threading portion; said middle section further comprises: at least one spreading element.

4. The process according to claim 1, wherein said intervertebral disk prosthesis comprises substantially a U-shape and has a first shank and a second shank, and wherein said first and second shanks are operatively pivotable relative to one another during said process.

5. A process, according to claim 1, wherein: said step of introducing further comprises the steps of: introducing said stabilizing element to lie on a connection line selected from a group of connection lines consisting of: (i) a connection line defined between a pedicle of a superior one of two adjacent vertebral bodies and between a point in the inferior third of the anterior edge of a sagittal section of an inferior one of said two adjacent vertebral bodies; and (ii) a connection line defined between a pedicle of the inferior one of the two adjacent vertebral bodies and between a point in the superior third of the anterior edge of the sagittal section of the superior one of said two adjacent vertebral bodies.

6. A process, according to claim 1, wherein: said step of introducing further comprises the steps of: introducing said stabilizing element to lie, when viewed dorsally in the sagittal direction, on a line having an entrance point selected from a group of lines having entrance points consisting of:

(i) a line that has an entrance point between the 9 and 11 o'clock positions and an exit point between the 4 and 6 o'clock positions on a pedicle clock of the superior vertebral body;

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(ii) a line that has an entrance point between the 1 and 3 o'clock positions and an exit point between the 6 and 8 o'clock positions on said pedicle clock of said superior vertebral body;

(iii) a line that has an entrance point between the 7 and 9 o'clock positions and an exit point between the 12 and 2 o'clock positions on the pedicle clock of the inferior vertebral body; and

(iv) a line that has an entrance point between the 3 and 5 o'clock positions and an exit point between the 10 and 12 o'clock positions on said pedicle clock of said inferior vertebral body.

7. A process, according to claim 1, wherein: said step of introducing said stabilizing element into said vertebral column through a single access point, further comprises the steps of:

providing a guide wire; and

introducing said stabilizing element along said guide wire.

8. A process, according to claim 1, wherein: said stabilizing element is constructed as a bone screw.

9. A process, according to claim 1, further comprising the step of:

varying a relative position of said two adjacent vertebral bodies to each other by a use of said stabilizing element.

10. A process, for introducing an intervertebral disk prosthesis into a vertebral space defined between two adjacent vertebral bodies of a vertebral column having a plurality of adjacent vertebral bodies, comprising the steps of:

providing a stabilizing element;

introducing said stabilizing element into said vertebral column through a single access point; said single access point being arranged dorso-laterally; said step of introducing including the step of: passing said stabilizing element through one of two of said adjacent vertebral bodies such that one end of said stabilizing element comes to lie in the other of said two adjacent vertebral bodies;

connecting said two of said adjacent vertebral bodies to each other along a longitudinal direction of said vertebral column;

providing an intervertebral disk prosthesis;

defining a single extraforaminal access point proximate said vertebral space;

introducing said intervertebral disk prosthesis through said single extraforaminal access point into said vertebral space, and wherein said stabilizing element passes through said intervertebral disk prosthesis.

11. A process, according to claim 10, further comprising the steps of:

providing a first fixation screw;

introducing said first fixation screw through said extraforaminal access point in either a transpedicularly direction or a extrapedicularly direction; and

attaching said first fixation screw to one of said two adjacent vertebral bodies.

12. A process, according to claim 11, further comprising the steps of:

providing a second fixation screw;

introducing said second fixation screw through said extraforaminal access point in either A transpedicularly direction or a extrapedicularly direction; and

attaching said second fixation screw to said second of said two adjacent vertebral bodies.

13. A process, according to claim 12, further comprising the steps of:

fastening a rod between said first fixation screw and said second fixation screw.

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14. A process, according to claim 10, whereby: prior to said step of introducing said intervertebral disk prosthesis, said process further comprising the steps of:

accessing an external set of nerve roots proximate said single extraforaminal access point and said intervertebral space; and

pressing said set of nerve roots in either an inferior-medially direction or a superior-laterally direction.

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